Classic Poetry Series

Ezra Pound
- poems -

Publication Date:
2012

Publisher:
Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

Ezra Pound(30 October 1885 – 1 November 1972)

Ezra Weston Loomis Pound was an American expatriate poet and critic and a major figure in the early modernist movement in poetry. He became known for his role in developing Imagism, which, in reaction to the Victorian and Georgian poets, favored tight language, unadorned imagery, and a strong correspondence between the verbal and musical qualities of the verse and the mood it expressed. His best-known works include Ripostes (1912), Hugh Selwyn Mauberley (1920), and his unfinished 120-section epic, The Cantos, which consumed his middle and late career, and was published between 1917 and 1969.

Early Life

Pound was born in Hailey, Idaho Territory, the only child of Homer Loomis Pound (1858–1942) and Isabel Weston (1860–1948). Both parents' ancestors had emigrated from England in the 17th century. On his father's side, John Pound, a Quaker, sailed from England around 1650. His grandfather, Thaddeus Coleman Pound (1832–1914), was a retired Republican Congressman for north-west Wisconsin who had made and lost a fortune in the lumber business. His son Homer, Pound's father, had worked for Thaddeus until Thaddeus secured him an appointment as Register of the Government Land Office in Hailey.

On his mother's side Pound was descended from William Wadsworth, a Puritan who emigrated from England to Boston on the Lion in 1632. The Wadsworths married into the Westons of New York, and Harding Weston and Mary Parker produced Isabel Weston, Pound's mother. Harding apparently spent most of his life without work, so his brother, Ezra Weston and his wife, Frances, looked after Mary and Isabel.

Isabel was unhappy living in Hailey, and when her son was 18 months old she left with him to go back East. Homer followed them, and in 1889 Homer took a job as an assayer at the Philadelphia Mint. The family moved to 417 Walnut Street in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, then in July 1893 bought a six-bedroom house at 166 Fernbrook Avenue in the town of Wyncote, Pennsylvania.

Education

Pound's early education took place in a series of so-called dame schools, some of them run by Quakers: Miss Elliott's school in Jenkintown in 1892; the Misses Heacock's Chelten Hills school in Wyncote in 1893; and the Florence Ridpath school from 1894, which became the Wyncote Public School a year later. From

1898 until 1900 he attended the Cheltenham Military Academy, where the boys wore Civil War-style uniforms, and were taught military drilling, how to shoot, and the importance of submitting to authority. Pound was clever, independent-minded, conceited, and unpopular.

He knew early on that he wanted to be a poet. His first publication was on 7 November 1896 in the Jenkintown Times-Chronicle, a limerick about an American politician, William Jennings Bryan—by E.L. Pound, Wyncote, Aged 11 years: "There was a young man from the West, / He did what he could for what he thought best." His first trip overseas came two years later when he was 13, a three-month tour of Europe with his mother and Aunt Frances, who took him to England, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. He was admitted to the University of Pennsylvania's College of Liberal Arts in 1901 at the age of 15:

I resolved that at 30 I would know more about poetry than any man living, that I would know what was accounted poetry everywhere, what part of poetry was "indestructible," what part could not be lost by translation and—scarcely less important—what effects were obtainable in one language only and were utterly incapable of being translated.

In this search I learned more or less of nine foreign languages, I read Oriental stuff in translations, I fought every University regulation and every professor who tried to make me learn anything except this, or who bothered me with "requirements for degrees."

He met Hilda Doolittle at the University of Pennsylvania. She was the daughter of the professor of astronomy, and later became known as the poet H.D. Doolittle wrote that she felt her life was irrevocably intertwined with Pound's; she followed him to Europe in 1908, leaving her family, friends, and country for little benefit to herself, and became involved with Pound in developing the "Imagisme" movement in London. He asked her to marry him in the summer of 1907, though her father refused permission, and wrote several poems for her between 1905 and 1907, 25 of which he hand-bound and called "Hilda's Book". He was seeing two other women at the same time—Viola Baxter and Mary Moore—later dedicating a book of poetry, Personae (1909), to the latter. He asked Mary to marry him that summer too, but she turned him down

His parents and Frances Weston took him on another three-month European tour in 1902, after which he transferred to Hamilton College in Clinton, New York—possibly because of poor grades—where he studied the Provençal dialect with William Pierce Shephard, and Old English with Joseph D. Ibbotson. David Moody writes that it was at Hamilton with Shephard that he read Dante, and out

of the discussions emerged the idea for a long poem in three parts—dealing with emotion, instruction, and contemplation—which planted the seed for The Cantos. He graduated with a BPhil in 1905, then studied Romance languages under Hugo A. Rennert at the University of Pennsylvania, obtaining his MA in the spring of 1906. He registered as a PhD student to write a thesis on the jesters in Lope de Vega's plays, and was awarded a Harrison fellowship and a travel grant of $500, which he used to visit Europe again. He spent three weeks in Madrid in various libraries, including one in the royal palace; he was actually standing outside the palace during the attempted assassination on 31 May 1906 by anarchists of King Alfonso, and left the country for fear he would be identified with them. He moved on to Paris, spending two weeks in lectures at the Sorbonne, followed by a week in London.

He returned to the U.S. in July, and his first essay, Raphaelite Latin, was published in Book News Monthly in September. In 1907, at the university he apparently annoyed Felix Schelling, the head of English, with silly remarks during lectures—which included insisting that George Bernard Shaw was better than Shakespeare, and taking out an enormous tin watch and winding it with slow precision—and his fellowship was not renewed at the end of the year. Moreover Schelling told Pound he was wasting his own time and that of the institution; Pound abandoned his dissertation and left without finishing his doctorate.

Teaching

In the fall of 1907 he took a job as a teacher of Romance languages at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana, a conservative town that he called the sixth circle of hell, with an equally conservative college from which he was dismissed after deliberately provoking the college authorities. Smoking was forbidden, so he would smoke cigarillos in his office down the corridor from the President's. He annoyed his landlords by entertaining friends, including women, and was forced to move from one house after "[t]wo stewdents found me sharing my meagre repast with a lady gent impersonator in my privut apartments," as he told a friend. He was eventually caught in flagrante, although the details remain unclear and he denied any wrongdoing. The incident involved a stranded chorus girl to whom he offered tea and his bed for the night when she was caught in a snowstorm; when she was discovered the next morning by the landladies, Misses Ida and Belle Hall, his insistence that he had slept on the floor was met with disbelief, and he was asked to leave the college. Glad to be free of the place he left for Europe soon after.

London (1908-1920)

He returned to Europe in the spring, arriving in Gibraltar in April with $80 in his pocket, but during the next few months earned money as a guide to American tourists. He sent poems to Harper's Magazine and began writing fiction that he hoped he could sell, and by the summer was in Venice, living over a bakery near the San Vio bridge. In July he self-published his first book of poetry, the 72-page A Lume Spento (With Tapers Spent), which sold 100 copies at six cents each. The London Evening Standard called it "wild and haunting stuff, absolutely poetic, original, imaginative." The title was from the third canto of Dante's Purgatorio, alluding to both the excommunicate Manfred's death, and to that of his friend, the Philadelphia artist William Brooke Smith, who died of consumption in his 20s.

In August he moved to London, where he ended up staying almost continuously for 12 years. He wanted to meet W.B. Yeats, the greatest living poet in Pound's view, and they became close friends, although Yeats was older by 20 years. He had sent Yeats a copy of A Lume Spento, and Yeats had replied that he found it charming. Pound told William Carlos Williams, a friend from university: "London, deah old Lundon, is the place for poesy." English poets such as Maurice Hewlett, Rudyard Kipling, and Alfred Lord Tennyson had made a particular kind of Victorian verse—stirring, pompous, and propagandistic—popular with the public. James Knapp writes that Pound wanted to focus on the individual experience, the particular, the concrete, and rejected the idea of poetry as versified moral essay.

Arriving in the city with £3, he rented a room at 8 Duchess Street in the West End, then at 48 Langham Street, near Great Titchfield Street, just a penny bus-ride from the British Museum. The house (see right) sat across an alley from the Yorkshire Grey pub, which made an appearance decades later in the Pisan Cantos, "concerning the landlady's doings / with a lodger unnamed / az waz near Gt Titchfield St. next door to the pub".

He persuaded the bookseller Elkin Mathews—publisher of Yeats's Wind Among the Reeds and the Book of the Rhymer's Club—to display A Lume Spento, and by October 1908 he was being discussed around town. In December he published a second collection, A Quinzaine for This Yule, and after the death of a lecturer at the Regent Street Polytechnic he managed to acquire a position lecturing in the evenings from January to February 1909 on "The Development of Literature in Southern Europe".

He would spend his mornings in the British Museum Reading Room, followed by lunch at the Vienna Café on Oxford Street. Ford Madox Ford described him, apparently tongue-in-cheek, as "approach[with the step of a dancer, making passes with a cane at an imaginary opponent. He would wear trousers made of

green billiard cloth, a pink coat, a blue shirt, a tie hand-painted by a Japanese friend, an immense sombrero, a flaming beard cut to a point, and a single, large blue earring."

Meeting Dorothy Shakespear, Personae

He met the novelist Olivia Shakespear—Yeats's former lover and the subject of his The Lover Mourns for the Loss of Love—at a literary salon in January 1909, and was invited to attend her Tuesday salons where he was introduced to Dorothy, Olivia's daughter, who became his wife in 1914. Through Olivia Shakespear he was introduced to Yeats, the artist Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Wyndham Lewis, and the rest of London's literary circle. Another patron was the American heiress Margaret Lanier Cravens (1881–1912), who after knowing him a short time offered him a large annual sum to allow him to focus on his work. Cravens killed herself in 1912, probably because the pianist Walter Rummel, long the object of her affection, married someone else, but possibly also because she learned of Pound's engagement to Dorothy.

In June 1909 another collection, Personae, was published by Mathews, his first publication to have any commercial success. It was reviewed by The Daily Telegraph and the Times Literary Supplement among others; they said it was full of passion and magic. Rupert Brooke gave a negative review in The Cambridge Review, complaining that Pound had fallen under the influence of Walt Whitman by writing in "unmetrical sprawling lengths". In September another 27 poems appeared as Exultations, dedicated to Carlos Tracey Chester who had published his essay in Book News Monthly in 1906.

Around the same time he moved into new rooms at Church Walk, off Kensington High Street, where he lived most of the time until 1914. His first book of literary criticism, The Spirit of Romance, was published in 1910, based on his lectures at the polytechnic; others included Instigations (1920), Indiscretions (1923), "How to Read" (1931), The ABC of Reading (1934), Make It New (1934), Polite Essays (1937), and Guide to Kulchur (1938).

In June 1910 he returned to the United States for eight months, in part to persuade the New York Public Library, then being built, to change its design. The New York Times wrote that he almost daily visited the architects' offices to shout at them.

His essays on America were written during this period, and were compiled as Patria Mia, published in 1950. He loved New York but no longer felt at home there. He felt the city was threatened by commercialism and vulgarity. He

suffered jaundice but nevertheless persuaded his parents to finance his passage back to Europe. It was nearly 30 years before he visited the United States again. On 22 February 1911 he sailed from New York on the R.M.S. Mauretania, arriving in Southampton six days later. After a few days in London, he visited Paris again, where he worked on a new collection of poetry, Canzoni (1911), panned by the Westminster Gazette as a "medley of pretension", and spent time with Margaret Cravens. When he returned to London in August 1911, A.R. Orage, editor of the socialist journal The New Age, hired him to write a weekly column, giving him a steadier income.

Imagism

Hilda Doolittle arrived in London from Philadelphia in May 1911 with the poet Frances Gregg and Gregg's mother; when they returned in September she decided to stay on. Pound introduced her to his friends, including the poet Richard Aldington, whom she fell in love with and married in 1913. Before then, the three of them lived in Church Walk—Pound at no. 10, Doolittle at no. 6, and Aldington at no. 8—and worked daily in the British Museum Reading Room.

At the museum he also met regularly with the curator and poet Laurence Binyon, who introduced him to the East Asian artistic and literary concepts that would become so vital to the imagery and technique of his later poetry. The museum's visitors' books show that Pound was often to be found during 1912 and 1913 in the Print Room examining Japanese Nishiki-e inscribed with traditional Japanese waka verse, a 10th century genre of poetry whose economy and strict conventions undoubtedly contributed to Imagist techniques of composition.

Pound was at that time working on the poems that became Ripostes (1912), trying to move away from his earlier work, which he wrote later had reduced Ford Madox Ford in 1911 to rolling on the floor laughing at Pound's stilted language. He realized with his translation work that the problem lay not in his knowledge of the other languages, but in his use of English:

What obfuscated me was not the Italian but the crust of dead English, the sediment present in my own available vocabulary ... You can't go round this sort of thing. It takes six or eight years to get educated in one's art, and another ten to get rid of that education.

Neither can anyone learn English, one can only learn a series of Englishes. Rossetti made his own language. I hadn't in 1910 made a language, I don't mean a language to use, but even a language to think in.

He understood that to change the structure of your language is to change the way you think and see the world. While living at Church Walk in 1912, Pound, Aldington, and Doolittle started working on ideas about language that became the Imagism movement. The aim was clarity: a fight against abstraction, romanticism, rhetoric, inversion of word order, and over-use of adjectives. Pound later said they agreed in the spring or early summer of 1912 on three principles:

1. Direct treatment of the "thing" whether subjective or objective.
2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.
3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome.

Superfluous words, particularly adjectives, were to be avoided, as were expressions like "dim lands of peace," which he said dulled the image by mixing the abstract with the concrete. He wrote that the natural object was always the "adequate symbol." Poets should "go in fear of abstractions," and should not re-tell in mediocre verse what has already been told in good prose. A classic example of the style is Pound's "In a Station of the Metro" (1913), inspired by an experience on the Paris Underground. "I got out of a train at, I think, La Concorde, and in the jostle I saw a beautiful face, and then, turning suddenly, another and another, and then a beautiful child's face, and then another beautiful face. All that day I tried to find words for what this made me feel."

Ripostes and Translation Work

It was in Ripostes, submitted to Swift & Co in February 1912 and published by them that October, that Pound moved toward more minimalist language, though Knapp writes that it is an uncertain volume, published when Pound had only begun his move toward Imagism; his first use of the word "Imagiste" was in Ripostes.

Michael Alexander writes that the poems show a greater concentration of meaning and economy of rhythm than his earlier work. The collection includes five poems by the British poet T.E. Hulme, killed in Flanders in 1917 during the First World War to Pound's great distress. It also includes his translation of the eighth-century Old English poem "The Seafarer", not a literal translation, but a personal interpretation intended for readers with no Old English, a poem in its own right.

It upset scholars, as did his other translations from Latin, Italian, French, and Chinese, either because of errors or because he lacked familiarity with the cultural context. Alexander writes that in some circles his translations made him

more unpopular than the treason charge, and the reaction to The Seafarer was a rehearsal for the response to Homage to Sextus Propertius in 1919. His translation from the Italian of Sonnets and ballate of Guido Cavalcanti was also published in 1912.

Of great importance too was his work on the papers of Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908), an American professor who had taught in Japan, and who had started translations of Japanese poetry and Noh plays, with which Pound became fascinated. Pound used Fenollosa's work as a starting point for what he called the ideogrammic method. Fenollosa had studied Chinese poetry under a Japanese scholar, and in 1913 his widow, Mary McNeil Fenollosa, decided to give his unpublished notes to Pound after seeing his work; she said she was looking for someone who cared about the poetry, rather than the philology.

Pound knew no Chinese himself, and was working from the posthumous notes of an American who had studied Chinese under a Japanese teacher. Nevertheless, Michael Alexander writes that there are competent judges of Chinese and English poetry who see Pound's work as the best translations of Chinese to English poetry ever made, though scholars have complained that it contains many mistakes, even more than The Seafarer. The result, the collection Cathay (1915), is in Alexander's view the most attractive volume of Pound's work. Wai-lim Yip of the Chinese University of Hong Kong writes: "One can easily excommunicate Pound from the Forbidden City of Chinese studies, but it seems clear that in his dealings with Cathay, even when he is given only the barest details, he is able to get into the central concerns of the original author by what we may perhaps call a kind of clairvoyance."

Marriage, BLAST

He was hired in August 1912 by Harriet Monroe as a regular contributor to Poetry, and started submitting poems by himself, James Joyce, Robert Frost, D. H. Lawrence, Yeats, H.D., and Aldington, as well as collecting material for a 64-page anthology, Des Imagistes (1914), which included Joyce's "I Hear an Army Charging Upon the Land." The Imagist movement began to attract attention from critics. In November 1913 Yeats took Pound to stay with him in rooms he rented in Stone Cottage in Coleman's Hatch, Sussex, to act as his secretary—Yeats's eyesight was failing—and they stayed there for 10 weeks, reading and writing, walking in the woods, and fencing for exercise. It was the first of three winters they spent there together, including two with Dorothy after she and Pound were married on 20 April 1914.

The marriage proceeded despite initial opposition from her parents, who were

concerned about Pound's lack of income. He had only his earnings from literary magazines, particularly Poetry, The New Freewoman, and The Egoist, and was probably earning considerably less than £300 a year. Dorothy's income was £50 of her own and £150 from her family. Her parents eventually consented, perhaps out of fear that she was getting older and no other suitor was in sight. Pound's concession to marry in church helped. Afterwards he and Dorothy moved into a large—famously triangular—room with no bathroom at 5 Holland Place Chambers, near Church Walk, with the newly wed Hilda and Richard Aldington living next door.

Pound began writing for Wyndham Lewis's literary magazine BLAST; only two issues ever appeared, the first in June 1914 and the second a year later. An advertisement in The Egoist said it would discuss "Cubism, Futurism, Imagisme and all Vital Forms of Modern Art." Pound took the opportunity to extend the definition of Imagisme to art, naming it Vorticism: "The image is a radiant node or cluster; it is ... a VORTEX, from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing." When in reaction to the magazine, Lascelles Abercrombie called for the rejection of Imagism and a return to the traditionalism of William Wordsworth, Pound challenged him to a duel on the basis that, "Stupidity carried beyond a certain point becomes a public menace."

Abercrombie suggested as their choice of weapon unsold copies of their own books. The publication of BLAST was celebrated at a dinner attended by New England poet Amy Lowell, who came to London to meet the Imagists, but Hilda and Richard were already moving away from Pound's understanding of the movement, as he moved closer to Wyndham Lewis's ideas. When Lowell agreed to finance an anthology of Imagist poets, Pound's work was not included. He began to call Imagisme "Amygism," and in July 1914 declared it dead, asking only that the term be preserved, although Lowell eventually Anglicized it.

First World War, Disillusionment

Between 1914 and 1916 he helped to have James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man serialized in The Egoist then published in book form, and he persuaded Poetry to publish T. S. Eliot's The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock in June 1915. Conrad Aiken writes that he had shown Prufrock to every conceivable editor in England, but it was dismissed as crazy. He eventually sent it to Pound who, Aiken writes, instantly saw that it was a work of genius and sent it to Poetry."[Eliot] has actually trained himself AND modernized himself ON HIS OWN," Pound wrote to Monroe in October 1914. "The rest of the promising young have done one or the other but never both. Most of the swine have done neither."

After the publication in 1915 of Cathay, Pound began to speak of working on his long poem. He told a friend in August: "It is a huge, I was going to say, gamble, but shan't," and in September told another that it was a "cryselephantine poem of immeasurable length which will occupy me for the next four decades unless it becomes a bore." About a year later, he had the form of the first three attempts at Canto I, published in Poetry in January 1917. He was now a regular contributor to three literary magazines. From 1917 he wrote music reviews for The New Age under the pen name William Atheling, and weekly pieces for The Little Review and The Egoist. The volume of writing exhausted him, and he began to believe he was wasting his time with prose.

In 1919 he collected and published his essays for The Little Review into a volume called Instigations, and published "Homage to Sextus Propertius" in Poetry. "Homage" is not a strict translation; Moody describes it as "the refraction of an ancient poet through a modern intelligence". Harriet Monroe, editor of Poetry, published a letter from a professor of Latin, W.G. Hale, saying that Pound was "incredibly ignorant" of the language, and alluded to "about three-score errors" in Homage. Harriet did not publish Pound's response, which began "Cat-piss and porcupines!!" and continued, "The thing is no more a translation than my 'Altaforte' is a translation, or than Fitzgerald's Omar is a translation ..." But she interpreted his silence after that as his resignation as foreign editor.

Hugh Selwyn Mauberley

Hugh Selwyn Mauberley—about a poet whose life, like Pound's, has become sterile and meaningless—was published in June 1920, marking his farewell to London. He was disgusted by the lives lost during the war and could not reconcile himself with it. Stephen Adams writes that, just as T. S. Eliot denied he was Prufrock, so Pound denied he was Mauberley, but the poem—made up of 18 short poems—is nevertheless read as autobiographical. It begins with a satirical analysis of the London literary scene, then turns to social criticism and economics, and an attack on the causes of the war, the word "usury" appearing in his work for the first time. The critic F.R. Leavis saw it as Pound's major achievement.

The war had shattered his belief in modern western civilization. He saw the Vorticist movement as finished and doubted his own future as a poet. He had only the New Age to write for, with other magazines ignoring his submissions or not reviewing his work. Toward the end of 1920 he and Dorothy decided their time in London was over, and resolved to move to Paris. A. R. Orage wrote in the January 1921 issue of The New Age:

Mr. Pound has shaken the dust of London from his feet with not too emphatic a gesture of disgust, but, at least, without gratitude to this country .... Mr. Pound has been an exhilarating influence for culture in England ... however, Mr. Pound ... has made more enemies than friends. Much of the Press has been deliberately closed by cabal to him; his books have for some time been ignored or written down; and he himself has been compelled to live on much less than would support a navvy.

Paris (1921-24)

The Pounds settled in Paris in January 1921 in an inexpensive apartment at 70 bis, rue Notre Dame des Champs. He became friendly with Marcel Duchamp, Tristan Tzara, Fernand Léger and others of the Dada and Surrealist movements, as well as Basil Bunting, Ernest Hemingway, and his wife Hadley. He spent most of his time building furniture for his apartment and bookshelves for the bookstore Shakespeare and Company, and in 1921 his Poems 1918–1921 was published. In 1922 Eliot sent him the manuscript of "The Waste Land", then arrived in Paris to edit it with Pound, who blue-inked it with comments like "make up yr. mind ..." and "georgian." Eliot wrote of it: "I should like to think that the manuscript, with the suppressed passages, had disappeared irrecoverably; yet, on the other hand, I should wish the blue pencilling on it to be preserved as irrefutable evidence of Pound's critical genius."

In 1924 Pound secured funding for Ford Madox Ford's transatlantic review from American attorney John Quinn, and in it were published works by Pound, Hemingway, and Gertrude Stein, as well as extracts from Joyce's Finnegans Wake, before the money ran out in 1925. Pound wrote music reviews for it that were later collected into Antheil and the Treatise on Harmony.

Hemingway turned to Pound, who had gained a reputation as "an unofficial minister of culture who acted as mid-wife for new literary talent", to blue-ink his short stories. Although 14 years younger than Pound, the two forged a relationship of mutual respect and friendship, living on the same street for a time, and touring Italy together in 1923; as Hemingway biographer Jeffrey Meyers writes, "They liked each other personally, shared the same aesthetic aims, and admired each other's work", with Hemingway assuming the status of pupil to Pound's teaching. Pound introduced Hemingway to Lewis, Ford, and Joyce, while Hemingway in turn tried to teach Pound to box, but as he told Sherwood Anderson, "[Ezra] habitually leads with his chin and has the general grace of a crayfish of crawfish".

Pound was 36 when he met the American violinist Olga Rudge in Paris in the fall of 1922, beginning a love affair that lasted 50 years. John Tytell writes that Pound had always felt there was a link between his creativity and his ability to seduce women, something Dorothy had turned a blind eye to over the years. He complained shortly after arriving in Paris that he had been there for three months without having managed to find a mistress. He was introduced to Olga, then 26, at a musical salon hosted by American heiress Natalie Barney in her home at 20 rue Jacob, near the Boulevard Saint-Germain.

The two moved in different social circles: she was the daughter of a wealthy Youngstown, Ohio steel family, living in her mother's Parisian apartment on the Right Bank, socializing with aristocrats, while his friends were mostly impoverished writers of the Left Bank. They spent the following summer in the south of France, where he worked with George Antheil to apply the concept of Vorticism to music, and managed to write two operas, including Le Testament de Villon. He also wrote pieces for solo violin, which Olga performed.

Italy (1924-45)

Pounds were unhappy in Paris. Dorothy was complaining about the winters, and Pound's health was poor. Hemingway wrote that Pound "indulged in a small nervous breakdown necessitating spending two days in the Am. Hospital (American Hospital). They decided to move to a quieter place, and chose Rapallo, Italy, a town with a population of 15,000. "Italy is my place for starting things," he told a friend. Olga Rudge followed them there, carrying Pound's child. She apparently had no interest in raising a child, but Tytell writes that she felt having one would keep her connected to him. She gave birth to a daughter, Mary, on 9 July 1925 in Brixen, and the baby was handed over to a German-speaking peasant woman whose own child had died, and who agreed to raise Mary (later de Rachewiltz) for 200 lire a month.

Pound told Dorothy about the birth, and in March 1926—after returning from a three-month visit to Egypt—she announced that she too was pregnant. She and Pound left Rapallo for Paris for the premiere of Le Testament de Villon, without mentioning the pregnancy to Pound's friends or parents, and on 10 September 1926 Hemingway drove her to the American Hospital of Paris for the birth of a son, Omar.

In a letter to his parents in October Pound wrote, "next generation (male) arrived. Both D & it appear to be doing well." Dorothy handed the baby over to her mother, Olivia, who raised him in London until he was old enough to go to boarding school. When Dorothy went to England each summer to see Omar,

Pound would spend the time with Olga, whose father had bought her a house in Venice. The arrangement meant his children were raised very differently. Mary had one pair of shoes and books about Jesus and the saints, while Omar was raised as an English gentleman in Kensington by his sophisticated grandmother.

In 1925 the literary magazine This Quarter dedicated its first issue to Pound, including tributes from Hemingway and Joyce. Pound published Cantos 17–19 in the winter editions. In March 1927 he launched his own literary magazine, The Exile, but only four issues were published. It did well in the first year, with contributions from Hemingway, E. E. Cummings, Basil Bunting, Yeats, William Carlos Williams and Robert McAlmon. J.J. Wilhelm argues that some of the worst work came from Pound himself in the form of rambling editorials about Confucianism and praise of Lenin. He continued to work on Fenollosa's manuscripts, and in 1928 won the Dial poetry award for his translation of Confucius's poem Ta Hio. That year Homer and Isabel visited him in Rapallo. They had not seen him since 1914, and by then Homer had retired so they decided to move to Rapallo themselves, taking a small house, Villa Raggio, on a hill above the town.

The Cantos

The bulk of Pound's work on The Cantos began after his move to Italy. Like all the other great epics, it is the story of good and evil, a descent into hell and progress to paradise. Its hundreds of characters fall into three groups: those who enjoy hell and stay there; those who experience a metamorphosis and want to leave; and a few who lead the rest to paradiso terrestre. He began work on it in 1915, but there were several false starts and he abandoned most of his earlier drafts, beginning again in 1922. The subject matter ranges from Odysseus, Troy, Dionysus, Malatesta, Confucius, and Napoleon, to Jefferson and Mussolini, Chinese history, Pisa, and usury, relying on memories, diaries, jokes, hymns, anecdotes, ideogrammic translation, and up to 15 different languages. Allen Tate, who supported Pound for the Bollingen Prize for the sections of The Cantos known as the Pisan Cantos, writes that the poem is not about anything, and has no beginning, middle, or end. He argues that Pound was incapable of sustained thought and was "at the mercy of random flights of 'angelic insight,' Icarian self-indulgences of prejudices."

The first three cantos—now known as the ur-Cantos—appeared in Poetry in June–August 1917. The Malatesta Cantos (Cantos VIII, IX, X, and XI of a Long Poem) appeared in The Criterion in July 1923, and two further cantos were published in the transatlantic review in January 1924. Pound published 90 copies in Paris in 1925 A Draft of XVI. Cantos of Ezra Pound for the Beginning of a Poem

of some Length now first made into a Book. It was followed by A Draft of XXX Cantos (1930), Eleven New Cantos XXI–XLI (1934), The Fifth Decade of Cantos (1937), Cantos LII–LXXI (1940), The Pisan Cantos (1948), written while in custody in Pisa, and Seventy Cantos (1950). The first complete edition was published in 1964 as The Cantos (1–109), followed by Drafts and Fragments: Cantos CX-CXVII (1968).

Turn to Fascism, Second World War

Pound came to believe during the 1920s that the cause of the First World War was finance capitalism, which he called "usury," and that the solution was C.H. Douglas's idea of social credit, with fascism as the vehicle for reform; he had met Douglas in The New Age offices and had been impressed by his ideas.

He presented a series of lectures on economics, and made contact with politicians in the United States about education, interstate commerce and international affairs. Although Hemingway advised against it, on 30 January 1933 Pound met Mussolini himself. Olga Rudge had played for Mussolini and had told him about Pound; Pound had already sent him a copy of Cantos XXX. During the meeting he tried to present Mussolini with a digest of his economic ideas, but Tytell writes that Mussolini brushed them aside, though he called the Cantos "divertente" (entertaining). The meeting was recorded in Canto 41: "'Ma questo' / said the boss, 'è divertente.'". Pound told Douglas that he had "never met anyone who seemed to GET my ideas so quickly as the boss."

A number of Pound's books were published in the 1930s, including ABC of Economics (1933), ABC of Reading (1934), Social Credit: An Impact (1935), Jefferson and/or Mussolini (1936), and A Guide to Kulchur (1938). In 1936 James Laughlin—who had visited him in Rapallo in 1933 as a 20-year-old student—set up New Directions Publishing, and acted as Pound's agent, finding publications to accept his work and writing reviews.

When Dorothy's mother died in October 1938 in London, Dorothy asked Pound to organize the funeral, where he met their 12-year-old son Omar for the first time in eight years. He visited T. S. Eliot and Wyndham Lewis, who produced a now-famous portrait of Pound reclining. In April 1939 he sailed for New York, believing he could stop America from involvement in the Second World War, happy to answer reporters' questions about Mussolini while he lounged on the deck of the ship in a tweed jacket. He traveled to Washington, D.C. where he met senators and congressmen.

Mary said he did it out of a sense of responsibility, rather than megalomania; he

was offered no encouragement, and left depressed and frustrated. He received an honorary doctorate from Hamilton College on 12 June, and a week later returned to Italy. He began writing antisemitic material for Italian newspapers, including one entitled "The Jews, Disease Incarnate." He wrote to James Laughlin that Roosevelt represented Jewry, and signed the letter "Heil Hitler." He started writing for Action, a newspaper owned by the British fascist, Sir Oswald Mosley, arguing that the Third Reich was the "natural civilizer of Russia." After war broke out in September 1939, he began a furious letter-writing campaign to the politicians he had petitioned six months earlier, arguing that the war was the result of an international banking conspiracy, and that the United States should keep out of it.

Radio Broadcasts

Tytell writes that by the 1940s no American or English poet had been so active politically since William Blake. Pound had written over a thousand letters a year during the previous decade, and had presented his ideas in hundreds of articles, as well as in The Cantos. According to Tytell, Pound's fear was an economic structure that depended on the armaments industry, where the profit motive alone would govern war and peace. He started reading George Santayana, and The Law of Civilization and Decay by Brooks Adams, finding confirmation of the danger of the capitalist and usurer becoming dominant. He wrote in The Japan Times that "Democracy is now currently defined in Europe as a 'country run by Jews,'" and told Oswald Mosley's newspaper the English were a slave race governed by the Rothschilds since Waterloo.

He broadcast over Rome Radio, though the Italian government was at first reluctant, concerned he might be a double agent. He told a friend: "It took me, I think it was, TWO years, insistence and wrangling etc., to GET HOLD of their microphone." He recorded just over a hundred broadcasts, and traveled to Rome one week a month to pre-record the 10-minute broadcasts, for which he was paid around $17. The broadcasts required the Italian government's approval in advance—though he often changed the text in the studio. The politics apart, he needed the money. Tytell writes that his voice had assumed a "rasping, buzzing quality like the sound of a hornet stuck in a jar." He continued to occasionally broadcast, and writing under pseudonyms until about April 1945, shortly before his arrest.

Arrest for Treason

A few weeks later he returned south via Milan to Olga and Dorothy. They had been living in Isabel's apartment, but it was small so they decided to move in

with Olga at Sant' Ambrogio. His daughter Mary, then 19, was sent to Gais in Switzerland, leaving Pound, as she wrote, "pent up with two women who loved him, whom he loved, and who coldly hated each other." He was in Rome when the Allies landed in Sicily in July 1943. Pound borrowed a pair of hiking boots and a knapsack and left the city, having finally decided to tell Mary about his wife and son. He traveled 450 miles north, spending a night in an air raid shelter in Bologna, and taking a train part of the way to Verona.

She almost failed to recognize him when he arrived, he was so dirty and tired. He told her everything about his other family; she later said she felt more pity than anger.

He returned to Rapallo, where on 2 May 1945, four days after Mussolini was shot, armed partisans arrived at the house while Pound was there alone. He stuffed a copy of Confucius and a Chinese dictionary in his pocket, and was taken to their HQ in Chiavari, although he was released shortly afterwards. He and Olga gave themselves up to an American military post in the nearby town of Lavagna.

It was decided that Pound should be transported to U.S. Counter Intelligence Corps headquarters in Genoa, where he was interrogated by Frank L. Amprin, the FBI agent assigned by J. Edgar Hoover to gather evidence following the 1943 indictment. Pound asked permission to send a cable to President Truman to offer to help negotiate peace with Japan. He also asked to deliver a final broadcast from a script called "Ashes of Europe Calling," in which he recommended peace with Japan, American management of Italy, the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, and leniency toward Germany. His requests were denied and the script forwarded to Hoover.

On 8 May, the day Germany surrendered, he told a reporter from the Philadelphia Record who had managed to get into the compound for an interview that Hitler was "a Jeanne d'Arc, a saint," and that Mussolini was an "imperfect character who lost his head." On 24 May he was transferred to the United States Army Disciplinary Training Center north of Pisa, used to house military personnel awaiting court martial. The temporary commander placed him in one of the camp's "death cells"—a series of six-by-six-foot outdoor steel cages lit up all night by floodlights.

He was left for three weeks in isolation in the heat, denied exercise, eyes inflamed by dust, no bed, no belt, no shoelaces, and no communication with the guards, except for the chaplain. After two and a half weeks he began to break down under the strain. Richard Sieburth writes that he recorded it in Canto 80, where Odysseus is saved from drowning by Leucothea: "hast'ou swum in a sea of

air strip / through an aeon of nothingness, / when the raft broke and the waters went over me." Medical staff moved him out of the cage the following week. On 14 and 15 June he was examined by psychiatrists, one of whom found symptoms of a mental breakdown, and he was transferred to his own officer's tent and allowed reading material. He began to write, and drafted what became known as The Pisan Cantos; the existence of a few sheets of toilet paper showing the beginning of Canto LXXXIV suggests he started it while in the cage.

United States (1945-58)

He was transferred to the United States on 15 November, 1945. An escorting officer's impression was that "he is an intellectual 'crackpot' who imagined that he could correct all the economic ills of the world and who resented the fact that ordinary mortals were not sufficiently intelligent to understand his aims and motives." On 25 November he was arraigned in Washington D.C. on charges of treason. The charges included broadcasting for the enemy, attempting to persuade American citizens to undermine government support of the war, and strengthening morale in Italy against the United States.

He was admitted to St. Elizabeths Hospital, where in June 1946 Dorothy was declared his legal guardian. He was held for a time in the hospital's prison ward, Howard's Hall, known as the "hell-hole," a building without windows in a room with a thick steel door and nine peepholes, which allowed the psychiatrists to observe him while they tried to agree on a ors were allowed only for 15 minutes at a time, while other patients wandered around outside the room screaming and frothing at the mouth, according to T. S. Eliot.

Pound's lawyer, Julien Cornell – whose efforts to have him declared insane are credited with having saved him from life imprisonment— requested his release at a bail hearing in January 1947. The hospital's superintendent, Winfred Overholser, agreed instead to move him to the more pleasant surroundings of Chestnut Ward, close to Overholser's private quarters, which is where he spent the next 12 years.

The historian Stanley Kutler was given access in the 1980s to military intelligence and other government documents about Pound, including his hospital records. He wrote that the psychiatrists believed Pound had a narcissistic personality, but they considered him sane. Kutler said that Overholser protected Pound from the criminal justice system because he was fascinated by him.

Tytell argues that Pound was in his element in Chestnut Ward. He was at last provided for, and was allowed to read, write, and receive visitors, including

Dorothy for several hours a day. He took over a small alcove with wicker chairs just outside his room, and turned it into his private living room, where he entertained his friends and important literary figures. He began work on his translation of Sophocles's Women of Trachis and Electra, and continued work on The Cantos. It reached the point where he refused to discuss any attempt to have him released. Olga Rudge visited him twice, once in 1952 and again in 1955, and was unable to convince him to be more assertive about his release. She wrote to a friend: "E.P. has ... bats in the belfry but it strikes me that he has fewer not more than before his incarceration."

The Pisan Cantos

His publisher, James Laughlin, had Cantos 74–84 ready for publication in 1946 under the title The Pisan Cantos, and even gave Pound an advance copy, but he had held it back, waiting for an appropriate time to publish. Tytell writes that in June 1948 a group of Pound's friends—Eliot, Cummings, W. H. Auden, Allen Tate, and Joseph Cornell—met Laughlin to discuss how to have him released. According to the poet Archibald MacLeish, the men conceived a plan to have Pound awarded the first Bollingen Prize, a new national poetry award just announced by the Library of Congress, with $1,000 prize money donated by the Mellon family.

The awards committee consisted of 15 fellows of the Library of Congress, including several of Pound's supporters, such as Eliot, Tate, Conrad Aiken, Amy Lowell, Katherine Anne Porter, and Theodore Spencer. The idea was that the Justice Department would be placed in an untenable position if Pound won a major award and was not released. Laughlin published The Pisan Cantos on 30 July 1948, and the following year the prize went to Pound. There were two dissenting voices, Katherine Garrison Chapin, the wife of Francis Biddle, the Attorney General who had indicted Pound for treason, and Karl Shapiro, who said that he could not vote for an antisemite because he was Jewish himself. Pound's response to the news of the award was, "No comment from the bughouse."

There was uproar. The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette quoted critics who said "poetry [cannot] convert words into maggots that eat at human dignity and still be good poetry." Robert Hillyer, a Pulitzer Prize winner and president of the Poetry Society of America, attacked the committee in The Saturday Review of Literature, telling journalists that he "never saw anything to admire in Pound, not one line." Congressman Jacob K. Javits demanded an investigation into the awards committee, and as a result it was the last time the prize was administered by the Library of Congress.

Controversial friendships, release

Although Pound repudiated his antisemitism in public, Tytell writes that in private it continued. He often refused to talk to psychiatrists with Jewish-sounding names, would refer to people he disliked as Jews, and urged his visitors to read the Protocols of the Elders of Zion (1903), a forgery claiming to represent a Jewish plan for world domination. He struck up a friendship during the 1950s with the writer Eustace Mullins, believed to be associated with the Aryan League of America, who wrote a biography of Pound, This Difficult Individual, Ezra Pound (1961).

Even more damaging was his friendship with a far-right activist and member of the Ku Klux Klan, John Kasper. Kasper had come to admire Pound during some literature classes at university, and after he wrote to Pound in 1950 the two became friends. Kasper opened a bookstore in Greenwich Village in 1953 called "Make it New," reflecting his commitment to Pound's ideas; it specialized in far-right material, including Nazi literature, and Pound's poetry and translations were displayed in the window. Kasper and another follower of Pound's, David Horton, set up a publishing imprint, Square Dollar Series, which Pound used as a vehicle for his tracts about economic reform. Kasper was eventually jailed for the 1957 bombing of the Hattie Cotton School in Nashville, targeted because a black girl had registered as a student. Wilhelm writes that there were a lot of perfectly respectable people visiting Pound too, such as the classicist J.P. Sullivan and the writer Guy Davenport, but it was the association with Mullins and Kasper that stood out, and it delayed his release from St Elizabeths. In an interview for the Paris Review in 1954, when asked by interviewer George Plimpton about Pound's relationship with Kaspar, Hemingway replied that Pound should be released and Kaspar jailed.

Eliot's friends continued to try to secure his release. MacLeish wrote to Hemingway in June 1957 asking him to write a letter on Pound's behalf. Hemingway believed Pound was unable to abstain from awkward political statements or from friendships with people like Kasper, but he signed the letters of support anyway, and pledged $1,500 to be given to Pound when he was released. Shortly after Hemingway won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954, he told Time magazine that "this would be a good year to release poets."

In 1957 several publications began campaigning for his release. Le Figaro published an appeal entitled "The Lunatic at St Elizabeths." The New Republic, Esquire and The Nation followed suit; The Nation argued that Pound was a sick and vicious old man, but that he had rights too. In 1958 MacLeish hired Thurman Arnold, a prestigious lawyer who ended up charging no fee, to file a motion to

dismiss the 1945 indictment. Overholser, the hospital's superintendent, supported the application with an affidavit saying Pound was permanently and incurably insane, and that confinement served no therapeutic purpose. The motion was heard on 18 April by the same judge who had committed him to St Elizabeths. The Department of Justice did not oppose the motion, and Pound was free.

Italy (1958-72)

Pound arrived in Naples in July, where he was photographed giving a fascist salute by the waiting press. When asked by the press when he had been released from the mental hospital, he replied: "I never was. When I left the hospital I was still in America, and all America is an insane asylum." He and Dorothy went to live with Mary at Castle Brunnenburg near Merano in the Province of South Tyrol, where he met his grandson, Walter, and his granddaughter, Patrizia, for the first time—then returned to Rapallo, where Olga Rudge was waiting to join them. They were accompanied by a teacher Pound had met in hospital, Marcella Spann, 40 years younger than he was, who was now ostensibly acting as his secretary, collecting poems for an anthology. The four women soon fell out, vying for control over him; Canto 113 alluded to it: "Pride, jealousy and possessiveness / 3 pains of hell." Pound was in love with Marcella, seeing in her his last chance for love and youth. He wrote about her in Canto CXIII: "The long flank, the firm breast / and to know beauty and death and despair / And to think that what has been shall be, / flowing, ever unstill." Dorothy had usually ignored his affairs, but she used her legal power over his royalties to make sure Marcella was seen off, sent back to America. Pound wrote to Hemingway: "Old man him tired."

By December 1959 he had fallen into a depression, insisting his work was worthless and The Cantos were botched. In a 1960 interview given in Rome to Donald Hall for Paris Review, he said: "You—find me—in fragments." Hall wrote that he seemed in an "abject despair, accidie, meaninglessness, abulia, waste." He paced up and down during the three days it took to complete the interview, never finishing a sentence, bursting with energy one minute, then suddenly sagging, and at one point seemed about to collapse. Hall said it was clear that he "doubted the value of everything he had done in his life." Those close to him thought he was suffering from dementia, and in the summer of 1960 Mary placed him in a clinic near Merano when his weight dropped. He picked up again, but by the spring of 1961 he had a urinary infection.

Dorothy felt unable to look after him, so he went that summer to live with Olga in Rapallo, then Venice; Dorothy mostly stayed in London after that with Omar. He attended a neo-Fascist May Day parade in 1962, but his health continued to

decline. The next year he told an interviewer, Grazia Levi, "I spoil everything I touch. I have always blundered. ... All my life I believed I knew nothing, yes, knew nothing. And so words became devoid of meaning."

William Carlos Williams died in 1963, followed two years later by T. S. Eliot. Pound attended Eliot's funeral in London and traveled to Dublin to visit Yeats's widow. Allen Ginsberg visited him in Rapallo in October 1967. He described his work to Ginsberg as: "A mess ... my writing, stupidity and ignorance all the way through," and in the Pensione Alle Salute da Cici restaurant in Venice, he told Ginsberg, Peter Russell, and Michael Reck: "... but my worst mistake was the stupid suburban anti-Semitic prejudice, all along that spoiled everything ... I found after seventy years that I was not a lunatic but a moron ... I should have been able to do better ..."

He traveled to New York two years later for the opening of an exhibition that featured his blue-inked version of Eliot's The Waste Land, and received a standing ovation at Hamilton College when he accompanied Laughlin who was receiving an honorary doctorate. Shortly before his death in 1972 it was proposed he be awarded the Emerson-Thoreau Medal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, but after a storm of protest the academy's council opposed it by 13 to 9. The sociologist Daniel Bell, who was on the committee, argued that it was important to distinguish between those who explore hate and those who approve it.

Two weeks before his 87th birthday he read for a gathering of friends at a café: "re USURY / I was out of focus, taking a symptom for a cause. / The cause is AVARICE."

On his birthday he was too weak to leave his bedroom at his home on the Piazza San Marco, and the following night he was admitted to the Civil Hospital of Venice, where he died in his sleep of an intestinal blockage on 1 November, aged 87, with Olga at his side. Dorothy was unable to travel to the funeral. Four gondoliers dressed in black rowed the body to the island cemetery, Isola di San Michele, where he was buried near Diaghilev and Stravinsky. Dorothy died in England the following year. Olga died in 1996 and was buried next to Pound.

Reception

Opinion varies about the nature of Pound's writing style. Critics generally agree that he was a strong lyricist, particularly in his early work. Scholars such as Ira Nadel see evidence of modernism in his poetry before he began the Cantos, and

Witmeyer argues that, as early as Ripostes, a modern style is evident. His style drew on literature from a variety of disciplines. Nadel writes that he wanted his poetry to represent an "objective presentation of material which he believed could stand on its own," without use of symbolism or romanticism. The Chinese writing system most closely met his ideals. He used Chinese ideograms to represent "the thing in pictures," and from Noh theater learned that plot could be replaced by a single image.

Nadel argues that imagism was to change Pound's poetry. He explains, "Imagism evolved as a reaction against abstraction ... replacing Victorian generalities with the clarity in Japanese haiku and ancient Greek lyrics." Imagism, to Pound, was a form of minimalism, as represented by the two-line poem "In a Station of the Metro". However, minimalism didn't lend itself to the writing of an epic such as the Cantos, and so Pound turned to the more dynamic structure of what he considered Vorticism for the Cantos.

Translations

In his Fenollosa translations, unlike previous American translators of Chinese poetry, who tended to work with strict metrical and stanzaic patterns, Pound created free verse translations. Whether the poems are valuable as translations continues to be a source of controversy. Pound scholar Ming Xie explains that the use of language in Pound's translation of the Old English poem "The Seafarer" is deliberate, avoiding merely "trying to assimilate the original into contemporary language". After his work with The Seafarer, it was in the Japanese Noh plays that he found an answer to his search for anti-naturalist minimalism which occurred just prior to his initial work with Fenellosa's papers, leading to the translation of 14 Chinese poems in Cathay, published in 1915.

Neither Pound nor Fenollosa spoke or read Chinese proficiently, and Pound has been criticized for omitting or adding sections to his poems which have no basis in the original texts, though critics argue that the fidelity of Cathay to the original Chinese is beside the point. Hugh Kenner, in a chapter "The Invention of China" from The Pound Era, contends that Cathay should be read primarily as a work about World War I, not as an attempt at accurately translating ancient Eastern poems. The real achievement of the book, Kenner argues, is in how it combines meditations on violence and friendship with an effort to "rethink the nature of an English poem". These ostensible translations of ancient Eastern texts, Kenner argues, are actually experiments in English poetics and compelling elegies for a warring West.

Michael Alexander writes that, as a translator, Pound was a pioneer with a great

gift of language and an incisive intelligence. He helped popularize major poets such as Guido Cavalcanti and Du Fu and brought Provençal and Chinese poetry to English-speaking audiences. He revived interest in the Confucian classics and introduced the west to classical Japanese poetry and drama. He translated and championed Greek, Latin and Anglo-Saxon classics, and helped keep them alive at a time when classical education was in decline, and poets no longer considered translations central to their craft.

 Legacy

His own work apart, he was responsible for advancing the careers of some of the best-known modernist writers of the early 20th century. In addition to Eliot, Joyce, Lewis, Frost, Williams, and Hemingway, he befriended and helped Marianne Moore, Louis Zukofsky, Jacob Epstein, Basil Bunting, E.E. Cummings, Margaret Anderson, George Oppen, and Charles Olson. Hugh Witemeyer argues that the Imagist movement was the most important in 20th-century English language poetry because hardly any prominent poet of Pound's generation and the two generations after him was untouched by it.

As early as 1917 Carl Sandburg wrote in Poetry: "All talk on modern poetry, by people who know, ends with dragging in Ezra Pound somewhere. He may be named only to be cursed as wanton and mocker, poseur, trifler and vagrant. Or he may be classed as filling a niche today like that of Keats in a preceding epoch. The point is, he will be mentioned."

Beyond this, his legacy is mixed. Hugh Kenner wrote in 1951 that there was no great contemporary writer less read than Pound, though he added that there was also no one who could appeal through "sheer beauty of language" to people who would rather read poets than talk about them. The British poet Philip Larkin criticized him, "for being literary, which to me is the foundation of his feebleness, thinking that poetry is made out of poetry and not out of being alive."

His antisemitism became central to an evaluation of his poetry, including whether it was read at all. Wendy Stallard Flory argues that the best approach to The Cantos—separating the poetry from the antisemitism—is perceived as apologetic. Her view is that the establishment of Pound as "National Monster" and "designated fascist intellectual" made him a stand-in for the silent majority in Germany, occupied France and Belgium, as well as Britain and the United States who, she argues, made the Holocaust possible by aiding or standing quietly by. The outrage after the treason charge was so deep that the imagined method of his execution dominated the discussion.

Arthur Miller considered him worse than Hitler: "In his wildest moments of human vilification Hitler never approached our Ezra ...he knew all America's weaknesses and he played them as expertly as Goebbels ever did". The response went so far as to denounce all modernists as fascists, and it was only in the 1980s that critics began a re-evaluation. The critic Macha Rosenthal wrote that it was "as if all the beautiful vitality and all the brilliant rottenness of our heritage in its luxuriant variety were both at once made manifest" in Ezra Pound.

[greek]

Be in me as the eternal moods
of the bleak wind, and not
As transient things are—
gaiety of flowers.
Have me in the strong loneliness
of sunless cliffs
And of gray waters.
Let the gods speak softly of us
In days hereafter,
the shadowy flowers of Orcus
Remember thee.

Ezra Pound

‘phasellus Ille’

1 his papier-mâché, which you see, my friends,
Saith 'twas the worthiest of editors.
Its mind was made up in 'the seventies',
Nor hath it ever since changed that concoction.
It works to represent that school of thought
Which brought the hair-cloth chair to such perfection,
Nor will the horrid threats of Bernard Shaw
Shake up the stagnant pool of its convictions;
Nay, should the deathless voice of all the world
Speak once again for its sole stimulation,
Twould not move it one jot from left to right.

Come Beauty barefoot from the Cyclades,
She'd find a model for St. Anthony
In this thing's sure decorum and behaviour.

Ezra Pound

A Ballad Of The Mulberry Road

The sun rises in south east corner of things
To look on the tall house of the Shin
For they have a daughter named Rafu,
(pretty girl)
She made the name for herself: 'Gauze Veil,'
For she feeds mulberries to silkworms.
She gets them by the south wall of the town.
With green strings she makes the warp of her basket,
She makes the shoulder-straps of her basket
from the boughs of Katsura,
And she piles her hair up on the left side of her headpiece.

Her earrings are made of pearl,
Her underskirt is of green pattern-silk,
Her overskirt is the same silk dyed in purple,
And when men going by look on Rafu
They set down their burdens,
They stand and twirl their moustaches.

Ezra Pound

A Girl

The tree has entered my hands,
The sap has ascended my arms,
The tree has grown in my breast -
Downward,
The branches grow out of me, like arms.

Tree you are,
Moss you are,
You are violets with wind above them.
A child - so high - you are,
And all this is folly to the world.

Ezra Pound

A Pact

I make a pact with you, Walt Whitman -
I have detested you long enough.
I come to you as a grown child
Who has had a pig-headed father;
I am old enough now to make friends.
It was you that broke the new wood,
Now is a time for carving.
We have one sap and one root -
Let there be commerce between us.

Ezra Pound

A Song Of The Degrees

I
Rest me with Chinese colours,
For I think the glass is evil.

II
The wind moves above the wheat-
With a silver crashing,
A thin war of metal.

I have known the golden disc,
I have seen it melting above me.
I have known the stone-bright place,
The hall of clear colours.

III
O glass subtly evil, O confusion of colours !
O light bound and bent in, soul of the captive,
Why am I warned? Why am I sent away?
Why is your glitter full of curious mistrust?
O glass subtle and cunning, O powdery gold!
O filaments of amber, two-faced iridescence!

Ezra Pound

A Villonaud: Ballad Of The Gibbet

SCENE: 'En ce bourdel ou tenons nostre estat.'

It being remembered that there were six of us with Master Villon, when that expecting presently lo be hanged he writ a ballad whereof ye know:

‘Freres humains qui apres nous vivez.'

Drink ye a skoal for the gallows tree!
Francois and Margot and thee and me,
Drink we the comrades merrily
That said us, 'Till then' for the gallows tree!

Fat Pierre with the hook gauche-main,
Thomas Larron 'Ear-the-less',
Tybalde and that armouress
Who gave this poignard its premier stain
Pinning the Guise that had been fain
To make him a mate of the 'Haulte Noblesse'
And bade her be out with ill address
As a fool that mocketh his drue's disdeign.

Drink we a skoal for the gallows tree!
Francois and Margot and thee and me,
Drink we to Marienne Ydole,
That hell brenn not her o'er cruelly.

Drink we the lusty robbers twain,
Black is the pitch o' their wedding dress,
Lips shrunk back for the wind's caress
As lips shrink back when we feel the strain

Of love that loveth in hell's disdeign,
And sense the teeth through the lips that press
'Gainst our lips for the soul's distress
That striveth to ours across the pain.

Drink we skoal to the gallows tree!
Francois and Margot and thee and me,
For Jehan and Raoul de Vallerie

Whose frames have the night and its winds in fee.

Maturin, Guillaume, Jacques d'Allmain,
Culdou lacking a coat to bless
One lean moiety of his nakedness
That plundered St. Hubert back o' the fane:
Aie! the lean bare tree is widowed again
For Michault le Borgne that would confess
In 'faith and troth' to a traitoress,
'Which of his brothers had he slain?'

But drink we skoal to the gallows tree!
Francois and Margot and thee and me:

These that we loved shall God love less
And smite always at their faibleness?

Skoal!! to the gallows! and then pray we:
God damn his hell out speedily
And bring their souls to his 'Haulte Citee'.

Ezra Pound

A Virginal

No, no! Go from me. I have left her lately.
I will not spoil my sheath with lesser brightness,
For my surrounding air hath a new lightness;
Slight are her arms, yet they have bound me straitly
And left me cloaked as with a gauze of aether;
As with sweet leaves; as with subtle clearness.
Oh, I have picked up magic in her nearness
To sheathe me half in half the things that sheathe her.
No, no! Go from me. I have still the flavour,
Soft as spring wind that's come from birchen bowers.
Green come the shoots, aye April in the branches,
As winter's wound with her sleight hand she staunches,
Hath of the trees a likeness of the savour:
As white their bark, so white this lady's hours.

Ezra Pound

Alba

As cool as the pale wet leaves
      of lily-of-the-valley
She lay beside me in the dawn.

Ezra Pound

Albatre

This lady in the white bath-robe which she calls a
peignoir,
Is, for the time being, the mistress of my friend,
And the delicate white feet of her little white dog
Are not more delicate than she is,
Nor would Gautier himself have despised their contrasts
in whiteness
As she sits in the great chair
Between the two indolent candles.

Ezra Pound

Alf’s Eighth Bit

Vex not thou the banker's mind
(His what?) with a show of sense,
Vex it not, Willie, his mind,
Or pierce its pretence
On the supposition that it ever
Was other, or that this cheerful giver
Will give, save to the blind.

Come not anear the dark-browed sophist
Who on the so well-paid ground
Will cheerfully tell you a fist is no fist,
Come not here
With 2 and 2 making 4 in reason,
Knowest thou not the truth is never in season
In these quarters or Fleet St.?

In his eye there is death, I mean the banker's,
In his purse there is deceit,
It is he who buys gold-braid for the swankers
And gives you Australian iced rabbits' meat
In place of the roast beef of Britain,
And leaves you a park bench to sit on
If you git off the Embankment.

This is the kind of tone and Solemnity
That used to be used on the young,
My old man got no indemnity
But he swaller'd his tongue.
Like all his class was told to hold it in those days,
To mind their ‘p’s’ and their ‘q’s’ and their ways
An' be thankful for occasional holidays.

I don't quite see the joke any more,
Or why we should stand to attention
And lick the dirt off the floor
In the hope of honourable mention
From a great employer like Selfridge
Or a buyer of space in the papers.
I'm getting too old for such capers.

Alf’s Fifth Bit

The pomps of butchery, financial power,
Told 'em to die in war, and then to save,
Then cut their saving to the half or lower;
When will this system lie down in its grave?

The pomps of Fleet St., festering year on year,
Hid truth and lied, and lied and hid the facts.
The pimps of Whitehall ever more in fear,
Hid health statistics, dodged the Labour Acts.

All drew their pay, and as the pay grew less,
The money rotten and more rotten yet,
Hid more statistics, more feared to confess
C.3, C.4, 'twere better to forget

How many weak of mind, how much tuberculosis
Filled the back alleys and the back to back houses.
'The medical report this week discloses . . .'
'Time for that question!' Front Bench interposes.

Time for that question? and the time is NOW.
Who ate the profits, and who locked 'em in
The unsafe safe, wherein all rots, and no man can say how
What was the nation's, now by Norman's kin
Is one day blown up large, the next, ducked in?

Ezra Pound

Alf's Fourth Bit

Rudyard the dud yard,
Rudyard the false measure,
Told 'em that glory
Ain't always a pleasure,
But said it wuz glorious nevertheless
To lick the boots of the bloke
That makes the worst mess.

Keep up the grand system
Don't tell what you know,
Your grandad got the rough edge.
Ain't it always been so ?
Your own ma' warn't no better
Than the Duchess of Kaugh.
My cousin's named Baldwin
An' 'e looks like a tofft

You 'ark to the sargent,
And don't read no books;
Go to God like a sojer;
What counts is the looks.

Ezra Pound

Alf's Ninth Bit

Listen, my children, and you shall hear
The midnight activities of Whats-his Name,
Scarcely a general now known to fame
Can tell you of that famous day and year.

When feeble Mr. Asquith, getting old,
The destinies of England were almost sold
To a Welsh shifter with an ogling eye,
And Whats-his-name attained nobility.

The Dashing Rupert of the pulping trade,
Rough from the virgin forests inviolate,
Thus rose in Albion, and tickled the State
And where he once set foot, right there he stayed.

Old 'Erb was doting, so the rumour ran,
Ahd Rupert ran the rumour round in wheels,
And David's harp let out heart-rending squeals:
'Find us a harpist ! ! DAVID is the man!!'

Dave was the man to sell the shot and shell,
And Basil was the Greek that rode around
On sea and land, with all convenience found
To sell, to sell, to sell, that's it, to SELL

Destroyers, bombs and spitting mitrailleuses.
He used to lunch with Balfour in those days
And if the papers seldom sang his praise,
The simple Britons never knew he was,

Until a narsty German told them so.
Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of things that happened very long ago,
And scarcely heed one word of what you hear.

Bury it all, bury it all well deep,
And let the blighters start it all over again.
They'll trick you again and again, as you sleep;
But you shall know that these were the men,

Ezra Pound

Alf's Second Bit

THE NEO-COMMUNE

Manhood of England,
Dougth of the Shires,
Want Russia to save 'em
And answer their prayers.
Want Russia to save 'em,
Lenin to save 'em, Trotsky to save 'em
(And valets to shave 'em)
The youth of the Shires!

Down there in Cambridge
Between auction and plain bridge,
Romance, revolution 1918!
An idea between 'em
I says! 'ave you seen 'em?
The flower of Cambridge,
The youth of the Shires?

Ezra Pound

Alf's Seventh Bit

Did I 'ear it 'arf in a doze:
The Co-ops was a goin' somewhere,
Did I 'ear it while pickin' 'ops;
How they better start takin' care,

That the papers were gettin' together
And the larger stores were likewise
Considering something that would, as you
Might say, be a surprise

To the Co-ops, a echo or somethin'?
They tell me that branded goods
Don't get a discount like Mr. Selfridge
Of 25 per cent, on their ads., and the woods

Is where the Co-ops are goin' to,
And that Oxford Street site
Is not suited to co-operation
A sort of'Arab's dream in the night.

''We have plenty, so let it be.'
The example of these consumers in co-operation
Might cause thought and be therefore
A peril to Selfridge and the nation.

Ezra Pound

Alf's Sixth Bit

Let some new lying ass,
Who knows not what is or was,
Talk economics,
Pay for his witless noise,
Get the kid nice new toys,
Call him 'professor'.

Lies from the specialist
Give t'old ones a newer twist
Harder to untie.
Here comes the hired gang
Blood on each tired fang
Covered with lip-stick.

'Oh, what a charming man,'
That's how the press blurb ran,
'Professor K s is.'
Now they can't fire him.
NO! they won't hire him.
Still Dr. S 's
Not tied to the ring around,
Not quite snowed under.

Being a physicist
They can't quite bribe him:
Oh, what a noise they made
Those parliamentarians.

Oh what a fuss they made
Stirring the marmalade
These parliamentarians
Never an honest word
In their dim halls was heard
For more than a decade.

Ezra Pound

Alf’s Tenth Bit

WIND

Scarce and thin, scarce and thin
The government's excuse,
Never at all will they do
Aught of the slightest use.
Over the dying half-wits blow,
Over the empty-headed, and the slow
Marchers, not getting forwarder,
While Ramsay MacDonald sleeps, sleeps.

Fester and rot, fester and rot,
And angle and tergiversate
One thing among all things you will not
Do, that is: think, before it's too late.
Election will not come very soon,
And those born with a silver spoon,
Will keep it a little longer,
Until the mind of the old nation gets a little stronger.

Ezra Pound

Alf’s Third Bit

DOLE THE BELL! BELL THE DOLE!

Whom can these duds attack?
Soapy Sime? Slipp'ry Mac?
Naught but a shirt is there
Such as the fascists wear,
Never the man inside
Moving a nation-wide
Disgust with hokum.

Plenty to right of 'em,
Plenty to left of 'em,
Yeh! What is left of 'em,
Boozy, uncertain.
See how they take it all, .
Down there in Clerkenwall
Readin' th' pypers!

Syrup and soothing dope,
Sure, they can live on hope,
Ain't yeh got precedent ?
Ten years and twelve years gone,
Ten more and nothing done,
GOD save Britannia!

Ezra Pound

Alf's Twelfth Bit

BALLAD FOR THE TIMES' SPECIAL SILVER NUMBER

Sez the Times a silver lining
Is what has set us pining,
Montague, Montague!

In the season sad and weary
When our minds are very bleary,
Montague, Montague!

There is Sir Hen. Deterding
His phrases interlarding,
Montague, Montague!

With the this and that and what
For putting silver on the spot,
Montague, Montague!

Just drop it in the slot
And it will surely boil the pot,
Montague, Montague!

Gold, of course, is solid too,
But some silver set to stew
Might do, too. Montague!
With a lively wood-pulp ‘ad’.

To cheer the bad and sad,
Montague, Montague!

Ezra Pound

Amities

I

To one, on returning certain years after

You wore the same quite correct clothing,
You took no pleasure at all in my triumphs,
You had the same old air of condescension
Mingled with a curious fear
That I, myself, might have enjoyed them.
Te Voilel, mon Bourrienne, you also shall be immortal.

II
To another

And we say good-bye to you also,
For you seem never to have discovered
That your relationship is wholly parasitic;
Yet to our feasts you bring neither
Wit, nor good spirits, nor the pleasing attitudes
Of discipleship.

III
But you, bos amic, we keep on,
For you we owe a real debt:
In spite of your obvious flaws,
You once discovered a moderate chop-house.

IV
Iste fuit vir incultus,
Deo Laus, quod est sepultus,
Vermes habent eius vultum
A-a-a-a –A-men.
Ego autem jovialis
Gaudero contubernalis
Cum jocunda femina.

Ezra Pound

An Immorality

Sing we for love and idleness,
Naught else is worth the having.

Though I have been in many a land,
There is naught else in living.

And I would rather have my sweet,
Though rose-leaves die of grieving,

Than do high deeds in Hungary
To pass all men's believing.

Ezra Pound

An Object

This thing, that hath a code and not a core,
Hath set acquaintance where might be affections,
And nothing now
Disturbeth his reflections.

Ezra Pound

Ancient Music

Winter is icummen in,
Lhude sing Goddamm.
Raineth drop and staineth slop,
And how the wind doth ramm!
Sing: Goddamm.

Skiddeth bus and sloppeth us,
An ague hath my ham.
Freezeth river, turneth liver,
Damn you, sing: Goddamm.

Goddamm, Goddamm, 'tis why I am, Goddamm,
So 'gainst the winter's balm.

Sing goddamm, damm, sing Goddamm.
Sing goddamm, sing goddamm, DAMM.

Ezra Pound

Ancient Wisdom, Rather Cosmic

So-shu dreamed,
And having dreamed that he was a bird, a bee, and a butterfly,
He was uncertain why he should try to feel like anything else,

Hence his contentment.

Ezra Pound

Ancora

Good God! They say you are risqué,
O canzonetti!
We who went out into the four A. M. of the world
Composing our albas,
We who shook off our dew with the rabbits,
We who have seen even Artemis a-binding her sandals,
Have we ever heard the like?
O mountains of Hellas!!
Gather about me, O Muses!
When we sat upon the granite brink in Helicon
Clothed in the tattered sunlight,
Muses with delicate shins,
O Muses with delectable knee-joints,
When we splashed and were splashed with
The lucid Castalian spray,
Had we ever such an epithet cast upon us!!

Ezra Pound

And The Days Are Not Full Enough

And the days are not full enough
And the nights are not full enough
And life slips by like a field mouse
      Not shaking the grass

Ezra Pound

And Thus In Nineveh

Aye! I am a poet and upon my tomb
Shall maidens scatter rose leaves
And men myrtles, ere the night
Slays day with her dark sword.

'Lo ! this thing is not mine
Nor thine to hinder,
For the custom is full old,
And here in Nineveh have I beheld
Many a singer pass and take his place
In those dim halls where no man troubleth
His sleep or song.
And many a one hath sung his songs
More craftily, more subtle-souled than I;
And many a one now doth surpass
My wave-worn beauty with his wind of flowers,
Yet am I poet, and upon my tomb
Shall all men scatter rose leaves
Ere the night slay light
With her blue sword.

‘It is not, Raana, that my song rings highest
Or more sweet in tone than any, but that I
Am here a Poet, that doth drink of life
As lesser men drink wine.’

Ezra Pound

Another Bit And An Offer

I see by the morning papers
That America's sturdy sons
Have started a investigation
Of the making of guns.

The morning paper tells me
They have asked the senate to guess
Whether Mr. Dupont and the gun-sharks
Have influence with the press.

I sit alone in the twilight
After my work is done
And wonder if my day's three and eight-pence
Would count on the price of a gun.

Was I started wrong as a kiddie,
And would my old man have been smarter
To send me to work in Vickers
Instead of being a carter?

Ezra Pound

Apparuit

Golden rose the house, in the portal I saw
thee, a marvel, carven in subtle stuff, a
portent. Life died down in the lamp and flickered,
caught at the wonder.

Crimson, frosty with dew, the roses bend where
thou afar, moving in the glamorous sun,
drinkst in life of earth, of the air, the tissue
golden about thee.

Green the ways, the breath of the fields is thine there,
open lies the land, yet the steely going
darkly hast thou dared and the dreaded aether
parted before thee.

Swift at courage thou in the shell of gold, casting
a-loose the cloak of the body, earnest
straight, then shone thine oriel and the stunned light
faded about thee.

Half the graven shoulder, the throat aflash with
strands of light inwoven about it, loveliest
of all things, frail alabaster, ah me!
swift in departing.

Clothed in goldish weft, delicately perfect,
gone as wind ! The cloth of the magical hands!
Thou a slight thing, thou in access of cunning
dar'dst to assume this?

Ezra Pound

April

Three spirits came to me
And drew me apart
To where the olive boughs
Lay stripped upon the ground:
Pale carnage beneath bright mist.

Ezra Pound

Arides

The bashful Arides
Has married an ugly wife,
He was bored with his manner of life,
Indifferent and discouraged he thought he might as
Well do this as anything else.

Saying within his heart,’I am no use to myself,
'Let her, if she wants me, take me.'
He went to his doom.

Ezra Pound

Ä?ñßá (Greek Title)

Be in me as the eternal moods
of the bleak wind, and'not
As transient things are
gaiety of flowers.
Have me in the strong loneliness
of sunless cliffs
And of grey waters.
Let the gods speak softly of us
In days hereafter,
The shadowy flowers of Orcus
Remember thee.

Ezra Pound

Au Jardin

O you away high there,
you that lean
From amber lattices upon the cobalt night,
I am below amid the pine trees,
Amid the little pine trees, hear me!

'The jester walked in the garden.'
Did he so?
Well, there's no use your loving me
That way, Lady;
For I've nothing but songs to give you.

I am set wide upon the world's ways
To say that life is, some way, a gay thing,
But you never string two days upon one wire
But there'll come sorrow of it.
And I loved a love once,
Over beyond the moon there,
I loved a love once,
And, may be, more times,

But she danced like a pink moth in the shrubbery.
Oh, I know you women from the 'other folk',
And it'll all come right,
O' Sundays.

'The jester walked in the garden.'
Did he so?

Ezra Pound

Au Salon

Her grave, sweet haughtiness
Pleaseth me, and in like wise
Her quiet ironies.
Others are beautiful, none more, some less.

I suppose, when poetry comes down to facts,
When our souls are returned to the gods
And the spheres they belong in,
Here in the every-day where our acts
Rise up and judge us;

I suppose there are a few dozen verities
That no shift of mood can shake from us:

One place where we'd rather have tea
(Thus far hath modernity brought us)
'Tea' (Damn you!)

Have tea, damn the Caesars,
Talk of the latest success, give wing to some scandal,
Garble a name we detest, and for prejudice?
Set loose the whole consummate pack
to bay like Sir Roger de Coverley's
This our reward for our works,
sic crescit gloria mundi:
Some circle of not more than three
that we prefer to play up to,
Some few whom we'd rather please
than hear the whole aegrum vulgus
Splitting its beery jowl
a-meaowling our praises.
Some certain peculiar things,
cari laresque, penates,
Some certain accustomed forms,
the absolute unimportant.

Ezra Pound

Ballad For Gloom

For God, our God is a gallant foe
That playeth behind the veil.

I have loved my God as a child at heart
That seeketh deep bosoms for rest,
I have loved my God as a maid to man—
But lo, this thing is best:

To love your God as a gallant foe that plays behind the veil;
To meet your God as the night winds meet beyond Arcturus' pale.

I have played with God for a woman,
I have staked with my God for truth,
I have lost to my God as a man, clear-eyed—
His dice be not of ruth.

For I am made as a naked blade,
But hear ye this thing in sooth:

Who loseth to God as man to man
Shall win at the turn of the game.
I have drawn my blade where the lightnings meet
But the ending is the same:
Who loseth to God as the sword blades lose
Shall win at the end of the game.

For God, our God is a gallant foe that playeth behind the veil.
Whom God deigns not to overthrow hath need of triple mail.

Ezra Pound

Ballad Of The Goodly Fere

Ha' we lost the goodliest fere o' all
For the priests and the gallows tree?
Aye lover he was of brawny men,
O' ships and the open sea.

When they came wi' a host to take Our Man
His smile was good to see,
"First let these go!" quo' our Goodly Fere,
"Or I'll see ye damned," says he.

Aye he sent us out through the crossed high spears
And the scorn of his laugh rang free,
"Why took ye not me when I walked about
Alone in the town?" says he.

Oh we drank his "Hale" in the good red wine
When we last made company,
No capon priest was the Goodly Fere
But a man o' men was he.

I ha' seen him drive a hundred men
Wi' a bundle o' cords swung free,
That they took the high and holy house
For their pawn and treasury.

They'll no' get him a' in a book I think
Though they write it cunningly;
No mouse of the scrolls was the Goodly Fere
But aye loved the open sea.

If they think they ha' snared our Goodly Fere
They are fools to the last degree.
"I'll go to the feast," quo' our Goodly Fere,
"Though I go to the gallows tree."

"Ye ha' seen me heal the lame and blind,
And wake the dead," says he,
"Ye shall see one thing to master all:
'Tis how a brave man dies on the tree."

A son of God was the Goodly Fere
That bade us his brothers be.
I ha' seen him cow a thousand men.
I have seen him upon the tree.

He cried no cry when they drave the nails
And the blood gushed hot and free,
The hounds of the crimson sky gave tongue
But never a cry cried he.

I ha' seen him cow a thousand men
On the hills o' Galilee,
They whined as he walked out calm between,
Wi' his eyes like the grey o' the sea,

Like the sea that brooks no voyaging
With the winds unleashed and free,
Like the sea that he cowed at Genseret
Wi' twey words spoke' suddently.

A master of men was the Goodly Fere,
A mate of the wind and sea,
If they think they ha' slain our Goodly Fere
They are fools eternally.

I ha' seen him eat o' the honey-comb
Sin' they nailed him to the tree.

Ezra Pound

Ballatetta

The light became her grace and dwelt among
Blind eyes and shadows that are formed as men;
Lo, how the light doth melt us into song:

The broken sunlight for a healm she beareth
Who hath my heart in jurisdiction.
In wild-wood never fawn nor fallow fareth
So silent light; no gossamer is spun
So delicate as she is, when the sun
Drives the clear emeralds from the bended grasses
Lest they should parch too swiftly, where she passes.

Ezra Pound

Before Sleep

The lateral vibrations caress me,
They leap and caress me,
They work pathetically in my favour,
They seek my financial good.

She of the spear stands present.
The gods of the underworld attend me, O Annubis,
These are they of thy company.
With a pathetic solicitude they attend me;
Undulant,
Their realm is the lateral courses.

Light!
I am up to follow thee, Pallas.
Up and out of their caresses.
You were gone up as a rocket,
Bending your passages from right to left and from left to right
In the flat projection of a spiral.
The gods of drugged sleep attend me,
Wishing me well;
I am up to follow thee, Pallas.

Ezra Pound

Black Slippers: Bellotti

At the table beyond us
With her little suede slippers off,
With her white-stocking'd feet
Carefully kept from the floor by a napkin,
She converses:

'Connaissez-vous Ostende?'

The gurgling Italian lady on the other side of the
restaurant
Replies with a certain hauteur,
But I await with patience,
To see how Celestine will re-enter her slippers.
She re-enters them with a groan.

Ezra Pound

Brennbaum

The sky-like limpid eyes,
The circular infant's face,
The stiffness from spats to collar
Never relaxing into grace;

The heavy memories of Horeb, Sinai and the forty years,
Showed only when the daylight fell
Level across the face
Of Brennbaum 'The Impeccable'.

Ezra Pound

Cantico Del Sole

The thought of what America would be like
If the Classics had a wide circulation
       Troubles my sleep,
The thought of what America,
The thought of what America,The thought of what America would be like
If the Classics had a wide circulation
      Troubles my sleep.
Nunc dimittis, now lettest thou thy servant,
Now lettest thou thy servant
       Depart in peace.
The thought of what America,
The thought of what America,
The thought of what America would be like
If the Classics had a wide circulation...
       Oh well!
       It troubles my sleep.

Ezra Pound

Canto 13

Kung walked
      by the dynastic temple
and into the cedar grove,
      and then out by the lower river,
And with him Khieu Tchi
      and Tian the low speaking
And "we are unknown," said Kung,
"You will take up charioteering?
      "Then you will become known,
"Or perhaps I should take up charioterring, or archery?
"Or the practice of public speaking?"
And Tseu-lou said, "I would put the defences in order,"
And Khieu said, "If I were lord of a province
"I would put it in better order than this is."
And Tchi said, "I would prefer a small mountain temple,
"With order in the observances,
      with a suitable performance of the ritual,"
And Tian said, with his hand on the strings of his lute
The low sounds continuing
      after his hand left the strings,
And the sound went up like smoke, under the leaves,
And he looked after the sound:
      "The old swimming hole,
"And the boys flopping off the planks,
"Or sitting in the underbrush playing mandolins."
      And Kung smiled upon all of them equally.
And Thseng-sie desired to know:
      "Which had answered correctly?"
And Kung said, "They have all answered correctly,
"That is to say, each in his nature."
And Kung raised his cane against Yuan Jang,
      Yuan Jang being his elder,
For Yuan Jang sat by the roadside pretending to
      be receiving wisdom.
And Kung said
      "You old fool, come out of it,
"Get up and do something useful."
      And Kung said
"Respect a child's faculties

"From the moment it inhales the clear air,
"But a man of fifty who knows nothng
    Is worthy of no respect."
And "When the prince has gathered about him
"All the savants and artists, his riches will be fully employed."
And Kung said, and wrote on the bo leaves:
    If a man have not order within him
He can not spread order about him;
And if a man have not order within him
His family will not act with due order;
    And if the prince have not order within him
He can not put order in his dominions.
And Kung gave the words "order"
and "brotherly deference"
And said nothing of the "life after death."
And he said
    "Anyone can run to excesses,
"It is easy to shoot past the mark,
"It is hard to stand firm in the middle."

And they said: If a man commit murder
    Should his father protect him, and hide him?
And Kung said:
    He should hide him.

And Kung gave his daughter to Kong-Tchang
    Although Kong-Tchang was in prison.
And he gave his niece to Nan-Young
    although Nan-Young was out of office.
And Kung said "Wan ruled with moderation,
    "In his day the State was well kept,
"And even I can remember
"A day when the historians left blanks in their writings,
"I mean, for things they didn't know,
"But that time seems to be passing.
A day when the historians left blanks in their writings,
But that time seems to be passing."
And Kung said, "Without character you will
    "be unable to play on that instrument
"Or to execute the music fit for the Odes.
"The blossoms of the apricot
    "blow from the east to the west,

"And I have tried to keep them from falling."

Ezra Pound

Canto 49

For the seven lakes, and by no man these verses:
Rain; empty river; a voyage,
Fire from frozen cloud, heavy rain in the twilight
Under the cabin roof was one lantern.
The reeds are heavy; bent;
and the bamboos speak as if weeping.

Autumn moon; hills rise about lakes
against sunset
Evening is like a curtain of cloud,
a blurr above ripples; and through it
sharp long spikes of the cinnamon,
a cold tune amid reeds.
Behind hill the monk's bell
borne on the wind.
Sail passed here in April; may return in October
Boat fades in silver; slowly;
Sun blaze alone on the river.

Where wine flag catches the sunset
Sparse chimneys smoke in the cross light

Comes then snow scur on the river
And a world is covered with jade
Small boat floats like a lanthorn,
The flowing water closts as with cold. And at San Yin
they are a people of leisure.

Wild geese swoop to the sand-bar,
Clouds gather about the hole of the window
Broad water; geese line out with the autumn
Rooks clatter over the fishermen's lanthorns,

A light moves on the north sky line;
where the young boys prod stones for shrimp.
In seventeen hundred came Tsing to these hill lakes.
A light moves on the South sky line.

State by creating riches shd. thereby get into debt?

Thsi is infamy; this is Geryon.
This canal goes still to TenShi
Though the old king built it for pleasure

K E I M E N R A N K E I
K I U M A N M A N K E I
JITSU GETSU K O K W A
T A N FUKU T A N K A I

Sun up; work
sundown; to rest
dig well and drink of the water
dig field; eat of the grain
Imperial power is? and to us what is it?

The fourth; the dimension of stillness.
And the power over wild beasts.

Ezra Pound

Canto I

And then went down to the ship,
Set keel to breakers, forth on the godly sea, and
We set up mast and sail on that swart ship,
Bore sheep aboard her, and our bodies also
Heavy with weeping, and winds from sternward
Bore us onward with bellying canvas,
Crice's this craft, the trim-coifed goddess.
Then sat we amidships, wind jamming the tiller,
Thus with stretched sail, we went over sea till day's end.
Sun to his slumber, shadows o'er all the ocean,
Came we then to the bounds of deepest water,
To the Kimmerian lands, and peopled cities
Covered with close-webbed mist, unpierced ever
With glitter of sun-rays
Nor with stars stretched, nor looking back from heaven
Swartest night stretched over wreteched men there.
The ocean flowing backward, came we then to the place
Aforesaid by Circe.
Here did they rites, Perimedes and Eurylochus,
And drawing sword from my hip
I dug the ell-square pitkin;
Poured we libations unto each the dead,
First mead and then sweet wine, water mixed with white flour
Then prayed I many a prayer to the sickly death's-heads;
As set in Ithaca, sterile bulls of the best
For sacrifice, heaping the pyre with goods,
A sheep to Tiresias only, black and a bell-sheep.
Dark blood flowed in the fosse,
Souls out of Erebus, cadaverous dead, of brides
Of youths and of the old who had borne much;
Souls stained with recent tears, girls tender,
Men many, mauled with bronze lance heads,
Battle spoil, bearing yet dreory arms,
These many crowded about me; with shouting,
Pallor upon me, cried to my men for more beasts;
Slaughtered the herds, sheep slain of bronze;
Poured ointment, cried to the gods,
To Pluto the strong, and praised Proserpine;
Unsheathed the narrow sword,

I sat to keep off the impetuous impotent dead,
Till I should hear Tiresias.
But first Elpenor came, our friend Elpenor,
Unburied, cast on the wide earth,
Limbs that we left in the house of Circe,
Unwept, unwrapped in the sepulchre, since toils urged other.
Pitiful spirit. And I cried in hurried speech:
'Elpenor, how art thou come to this dark coast?
'Cam'st thou afoot, outstripping seamen? '
        And he in heavy speech:
'Ill fate and abundant wine. I slept in Crice's ingle.
'Going down the long ladder unguarded,
'I fell against the buttress,
'Shattered the nape-nerve, the soul sought Avernus.
'But thou, O King, I bid remember me, unwept, unburied,
'Heap up mine arms, be tomb by sea-bord, and inscribed:
'A man of no fortune, and with a name to come.
'And set my oar up, that I swung mid fellows.'

And Anticlea came, whom I beat off, and then Tiresias Theban,
Holding his golden wand, knew me, and spoke first:
'A second time? why? man of ill star,
'Facing the sunless dead and this joyless region?
'Stand from the fosse, leave me my bloody bever
'For soothsay.'
        And I stepped back,
And he strong with the blood, said then: 'Odysseus
'Shalt return through spiteful Neptune, over dark seas,
'Lose all companions.' Then Anticlea came.
Lie quiet Divus. I mean, that is Andreas Divus,
In officina Wecheli, 1538, out of Homer.
And he sailed, by Sirens and thence outwards and away
And unto Crice.
        Venerandam,
In the Cretan's phrase, with the golden crown, Aphrodite,
Cypri munimenta sortita est, mirthful, oricalchi, with golden
Girdle and breat bands, thou with dark eyelids
Bearing the golden bough of Argicidia. So that:

Ezra Pound

Canto Iii

Another's a half-cracked fellow—John Heydon,
Worker of miracles, dealer in levitation,
In thoughts upon pure form, in alchemy,
Seer of pretty visions ('servant of God and secretary of nature');
Full of plaintive charm, like Botticelli's,
With half-transparent forms, lacking the vigor of gods.
Thus Heydon, in a trance, at Bulverton,
Had such a sight:
Decked all in green, with sleeves of yellow silk
Slit to the elbow, slashed with various purples.
Her eyes were green as glass, her foot was leaf-like.
She was adorned with choicest emeralds,
And promised him the way of holy wisdom.
'Pretty green bank,' began the half-lost poem.
Take the old way, say I met John Heydon,
Sought out the place,
Lay on the bank, was 'plungèd deep in swevyn;'
And saw the company—Layamon, Chaucer—
Pass each in his appropriate robes;
Conversed with each, observed the varying fashion.
And then comes Heydon.
'I have seen John Heydon.'
Let us hear John Heydon!
'Omniformis
Omnis intellectus est'—thus he begins, by spouting half of Psellus.
(Then comes a note, my assiduous commentator:
Not Psellus De Daemonibus, but Porphyry's Chances,
In the thirteenth chapter, that 'every intellect is omni-form.')
Magnifico Lorenzo used the dodge,
Says that he met Ficino
In some Wordsworthian, false-pastoral manner,
And that they walked along, stopped at a well-head,
And heard deep platitudes about contentment
From some old codger with an endless beard.
'A daemon is not a particular intellect,
But is a substance differed from intellect,'
Breaks in Ficino,
'Placed in the latitude or locus of souls'—
That's out of Proclus, take your pick of them.

Valla, more earth and sounder rhetoric—
Prefacing praise to his Pope Nicholas:
'A man of parts, skilled in the subtlest sciences;
A patron of the arts, of poetry; and of a fine discernment.'
Then comes a catalogue, his jewels of conversation.
No, you've not read your Elegantiae—
A dull book?—shook the church.
The prefaces, cut clear and hard:
'Know then the Roman speech, a sacrament,'
Spread for the nations, eucharist of wisdom,
Bread of the liberal arts.
Ha! Sir Blancatz,
Sordello would have your heart to give to all the princes;
Valla, the heart of Rome,
Sustaining speech, set out before the people.
'Nec bonus Christianus ac bonus
Tullianus.'
Marius, Du Bellay, wept for the buildings,
Baldassar Castiglione saw Raphael
'Lead back the soul into its dead, waste dwelling,'
Corpore laniato; and Lorenzo Valla,
'Broken in middle life? bent to submission?—
Took a fat living from the Papacy'
(That's in Villari, but Burckhardt's statement is different)—
'More than the Roman city, the Roman speech'
(Holds fast its part among the ever-living).
'Not by the eagles only was Rome measured.'
'Wherever the Roman speech was, there was Rome,'
Wherever the speech crept, there was mastery
Spoke with the law's voice while your Greek, logicians...
More Greeks than one! Doughty's 'divine Homeros'
Came before sophistry. Justinopolitan
Uncatalogued Andreas Divus,
Gave him in Latin, 1538 in my edition, the rest uncertain,
Caught up his cadence, word and syllable:
'Down to the ships we went, set mast and sail,
Black keel and beasts for bloody sacrifice,
Weeping we went.'
I've strained my ear for -ensa, -ombra, and -ensa
And cracked my wit on delicate canzoni—
Here's but rough meaning:
'And then went down to the ship, set keel to breakers,

Forth on the godly sea;
We set up mast and sail on the swarthy ship,
Sheep bore we aboard her, and our bodies also
Heavy with weeping. And winds from sternward
Bore us out onward with bellying canvas—
Circe's this craft, the trim-coifed goddess.
Then sat we amidships, wind jamming the tiller.
Thus with stretched sail
We went over sea till day's end:
Sun to his slumber, shadows o'er all the ocean.
Came we then to the bounds of deepest water,
To the Kimmerian lands and peopled cities
Covered with close-webbed mist, unpiercèd ever
With glitter of sun-rays,
Nor with stars stretched, nor looking back from heaven,
Swartest night stretched over wretched men there.
Thither we in that ship, unladed sheep there,
The ocean flowing backward, came we through to the place
Aforesaid by Circe.
Here did they rites, Perimedes and Eurylochus,
And drawing sword from my hip
I dug the ell-square pitkin, poured we libations unto each the dead,
First mead and then sweet wine,
Water mixed with white flour.
Then prayed I many a prayer to the sickly death's-heads
As set in Ithaca, sterile bulls of the best,
For sacrifice, heaping the pyre with goods.
Sheep, to Tiresias only,
Black, and a bell sheep;
Dark blood flowed in the fosse.
Souls out of Erebus, cadaverous dead
Of brides, of youths, and of many passing old,
Virgins tender, souls stained with recent tears,
Many men mauled with bronze lance-heads,
Battle spoil, bearing yet dreary arms:
These many crowded about me,
With shouting, pallor upon me, cried to my men for more beasts;
Slaughtered the herds—sheep slain of bronze,
Poured ointment, cried to the gods,
To Pluto the strong, and praised Proserpine.
Unsheathed the narrow steel,
I sat to keep off the impetuous, impotent dead

Till I should hear Tiresias.
But first Elpenor came, our friend Elpenor,
Unburied, cast on the wide earth—
Limbs that we left in the house of Circe,
Unwept, unwrapped in sepulchre, since toils urged other,
Pitiful spirit—and I cried in hurried speech:
'Elpenor, how art thou come to this dark coast?
Cam'st thou afoot, outstripping seamen?' And he in heavy speech:
'Ill fate and abundant wine! I slept in Circe's ingle,
Going down the long ladder unguarded, I fell against the buttress,
Shattered the nape-nerve, the soul sought Avernus.
But thou, O King, I bid remember me, unwept, unburied!
Heap up mine arms, be tomb by the sea-board, and inscribed,
A man of no fortune and with a name to come;
And set my oar up, that I swung 'mid fellows.'
Came then another ghost, whom I beat off, Anticlea,
And then Tiresias, Theban,
Holding his golden wand, knew me and spoke first:
'Man of ill hour, why come a second time,
Leaving the sunlight, facing the sunless dead and this joyless region?
Stand from the fosse, move back, leave me my bloody bever,
And I will speak you true speeches.'
'And I stepped back,
Sheathing the yellow sword. Dark blood he drank then
And spoke: 'Lustrous Odysseus, shalt
Return through spiteful Neptune, over dark seas,
Lose all companions.' Foretold me the ways and the signs.
Came then Anticlea, to whom I answered:
'Fate drives me on through these deeps; I sought Tiresias.'
I told her news of Troy, and thrice her shadow
Faded in my embrace.
Then had I news of many faded women—
Tyro, Alcmena, Chloris—
Heard out their tales by that dark fosse, and sailed
By sirens and thence outward and away,
And unto Circe buried Elpenor's corpse.'

Lie quiet, Divus.
In Officina Wechli, Paris,
M. D. three X's, Eight, with Aldus on the Frogs,
And a certain Cretan's

Hymni Deorum:
(The thin clear Tuscan stuff
Gives way before the florid mellow phrase.)
Take we the Goddess, Venus:
Venerandam,
Aurean coronam habentem, pulchram,
Cypri munimenta sortita est, maritime,
Light on the foam, breathed on by zephyrs,
And air-tending hours. Mirthful, orichalci
, with golden
Girdles and breast bands.
Thou with dark eye-lids,
Bearing the golden bough of Argicida.

Ezra Pound

Canto Xiii: Kung Walked

Kung walked
by the dynastic temple
and into the cedar grove,
and then out by the lower river,
And with him Khieu Tchi
and Tian the low speaking
And ``we are unknown," said Kung,
``You will take up charioteering?
``Then you will become known,
``Or perhaps I should take up charioterring, or archery?
``Or the practice of public speaking?''
And Tseu-lou said, ``I would put the defences in order,''
And Khieu said, ``If I were lord of a province
``I would put it in better order than this is.''
And Tchi said, ``I would prefer a small mountain temple,
``With order in the observances,
with a suitable performance of the ritual,''
And Tian said, with his hand on the strings of his lute
The low sounds continuing
after his hand left the strings,
And the sound went up like smoke, under the leaves,
And he looked after the sound:
``The old swimming hole,
``And the boys flopping off the planks,
``Or sitting in the underbrush playing mandolins.''
And Kung smiled upon all of them equally.
And Thseng-sie desired to know:
``Which had answered correctly?''
And Kung said, ``They have all answered correctly,
``That is to say, each in his nature.''
And Kung raised his cane against Yuan Jang,
Yuan Jang being his elder,
For Yuan Jang sat by the roadside pretending to
be receiving wisdom.
And Kung said
``You old fool, come out of it,
``Get up and do something useful.''
And Kung said
``Respect a child's faculties

``From the moment it inhales the clear air,
``But a man of fifty who knows nothng
Is worthy of no respect.''
And "When the prince has gathered about him
``All the savants and artists, his riches will be fully employed.''
And Kung said, and wrote on the bo leaves:
If a man have not order within him
He can not spread order about him;
And if a man have not order within him
His family will not act with due order;
And if the prince have not order within him
He can not put order in his dominions.
And Kung gave the words ``order''
and ``brotherly deference''
And said nothing of the ``life after death.''
And he said
``Anyone can run to excesses,
``It is easy to shoot past the mark,
``It is hard to stand firm in the middle.''

And they said: If a man commit murder
Should his father protect him, and hide him?
And Kung said:
He should hide him.

And Kung gave his daughter to Kong-Tchang
Although Kong-Tchang was in prison.
And he gave his niece to Nan-Young
although Nan-Young was out of office.
And Kung said ``Wan ruled with moderation,
``In his day the State was well kept,
``And even I can remember
``A day when the historians left blanks in their writings,
``I mean, for things they didn't know,
``But that time seems to be passing.
A day when the historians left blanks in their writings,
But that time seems to be passing.''
And Kung said, ``Without character you will
``be unable to play on that instrument
``Or to execute the music fit for the Odes.
``The blossoms of the apricot
``blow from the east to the west,

``And I have tried to keep them from falling."

Ezra Pound

Canto Xlix: For The Seven Lakes

For the seven lakes, and by no man these verses:
Rain; empty river; a voyage,
Fire from frozen cloud, heavy rain in the twilight
Under the cabin roof was one lantern.
The reeds are heavy; bent;
and the bamboos speak as if weeping.

Autumn moon; hills rise about lakes
against sunset
Evening is like a curtain of cloud,
a blurr above ripples; and through it
sharp long spikes of the cinnamon,
a cold tune amid reeds.
Behind hill the monk's bell
borne on the wind.
Sail passed here in April; may return in October
Boat fades in silver; slowly;
Sun blaze alone on the river.

Where wine flag catches the sunset
Sparse chimneys smoke in the cross light

Comes then snow scur on the river
And a world is covered with jade
Small boat floats like a lanthorn,
The flowing water closts as with cold. And at San Yin
they are a people of leisure.

Wild geese swoop to the sand-bar,
Clouds gather about the hole of the window
Broad water; geese line out with the autumn
Rooks clatter over the fishermen's lanthorns,

A light moves on the north sky line;
where the young boys prod stones for shrimp.
In seventeen hundred came Tsing to these hill lakes.
A light moves on the South sky line.

State by creating riches shd. thereby get into debt?

This is infamy; this is Geryon.
This canal goes still to TenShi
Though the old king built it for pleasure

K E I M E N R A N K E I
K I U M A N M A N K E I
JITSU GETSU K O K W A
T A N FUKU T A N K A I

Sun up; work
sundown; to rest
dig well and drink of the water
dig field; eat of the grain
Imperial power is? and to us what is it?

The fourth; the dimension of stillness.
And the power over wild beasts.

Ezra Pound

Canto Xlv

With Usura

With usura hath no man a house of good stone
each block cut smooth and well fitting
that design might cover their face,
with usura
hath no man a painted paradise on his church wall
harpes et luz
or where virgin receiveth message
and halo projects from incision,
with usura
seeth no man Gonzaga his heirs and his concubines
no picture is made to endure nor to live with
but it is made to sell and sell quickly
with usura, sin against nature,
is thy bread ever more of stale rags
is thy bread dry as paper,
with no mountain wheat, no strong flour
with usura the line grows thick
with usura is no clear demarcation
and no man can find site for his dwelling.
Stonecutter is kept from his tone
weaver is kept from his loom

WITH USURA
wool comes not to market
sheep bringeth no gain with usura
Usura is a murrain, usura
blunteth the needle in the maid's hand
and stoppeth the spinner's cunning. Pietro Lombardo
came not by usura
Duccio came not by usura
nor Pier della Francesca; Zuan Bellin' not by usura
nor was ‘La Calunnia' painted.
Came not by usura Angelico; came not Ambrogio Praedis,
Came no church of cut stone signed: Adamo me fecit.
Not by usura St. Trophime
Not by usura Saint Hilaire,
Usura rusteth the chisel

It rusteth the craft and the craftsman
It gnaweth the thread in the loom
None learneth to weave gold in her pattern;
Azure hath a canker by usura; cramoisi is unbroidered
Emerald findeth no Memling
Usura slayeth the child in the womb
It stayeth the young man's courting
It hath brought palsey to bed, lyeth
between the young bride and her bridegroom

CONTRA NATURAM
They have brought whores for Eleusis
Corpses are set to banquet
at behest of usura.

N.B. Usury: A charge for the use of purchasing power, levied without regard to production; often without regard to the possibilities of production. (Hence the failure of the Medici bank.)

Ezra Pound

Canto XVI

And before hell mouth; dry plain
            and two mountains;
On the one mountain, a running form,
            and another
In the turn of the hill; in hard steel
The road like a slow screw's thread,
The angle almost imperceptible,
             so that the circuit seemed hardly to rise;
And the running form, naked, Blake,
Shouting, whirling his arms, the swift limbs,
Howling against the evil,
             his eyes rolling,
Whirling like flaming cart-wheels,
             and his head held backward to gaze on the evil
As he ran from it,
              to be hid by the steel mountain,
And when he showed again from the north side;
              his eyes blazing toward hell mouth,
His neck forward,
              and like him Peire Cardinal.
And in the west mountain, Il Fiorentino,
Seeing hell in his mirror,
               and lo Sordels
Looking on it in his shield;
And Augustine, gazing toward the invisible.

And past them, the criminal
              lying in the blue lakes of acid,
The road between the two hills, upward
              slowly,
The flames patterned in lacquer, crimen est actio,
The limbo of chopped ice and saw-dust,
And I bathed myself with acid to free myself
             of the hell ticks,
Scales, fallen louse eggs.
             Palux Laerna,
the lake of bodies, aqua morta,
of limbs fluid, and mingled, like fish heaped in a bin,
and here an arm upward, clutching a fragment of marble,

And the embryos, in flux,
            new inflow, submerging,
Here an arm upward, trout, submerged by the eels;
            and from the bank, the stiff herbage
the dry nobbled path, saw many known, and unknown,
for an instant;
            submerging,
The face gone, generation.

            Then light, air, under saplings,
the blue banded lake under æther,
            an oasis, the stones, the calm field,
the grass quiet,
            and passing the tree of the bough
The grey stone posts,
            and the stair of gray stone,
the passage clean-squared in granite:
            descending,
and I through this, and into the earth,
            patet terra,
entered the quiet air
            the new sky,
the light as after a sun-set,
            and by their fountains, the heroes,
Sigismundo, and Malatesta Novello,
            and founders, gazing at the mounts of their cities.

The plain, distance, and in fount-pools
            the nymphs of that water
rising, spreading their garlands,
            weaving their water reeds with the boughs,
In the quiet,
            and now one man rose from his fountain
and went off into the plain.

Prone in that grass, in sleep;
            et j'entendis des voix:…
                                                wall . . . Strasbourg
Galliffet led that triple charge. . . Prussians
and he said   [Plarr's narration]
                  it was for the honour of the army.
And they called him a swashbuckler.

I didn't know what it was
But I thought: This is pretty bloody damn fine.
And my old nurse, he was a man nurse, and
He killed a Prussian and he lay in the street
there in front of our house for three days
And he stank. . . . . . .
Brother Percy,
And our Brother Percy…
old Admiral
He was a middy in those days,
And they came into Ragusa
. . . . place those men went for the Silk War. . . . .
And they saw a procession coming down through
A cut in the hills, carrying something
The six chaps in front carrying a long thing
on their shoulders,
And they thought it was a funeral,
but the thing was wrapped up in scarlet,
And he put off in the cutter,
he was a middy in those days,
To see what the natives were doing,
And they got up to the six fellows in livery,
And they looked at it, and I can still hear the old admiral,
"Was it? it was
Lord Byron
Dead drunk, with the face of an A y n. . . . .
He pulled it out long, like that:
the face of an a y n . . . . gel."

And because that son of a bitch,
Franz Josef of Austria. . . . . .
And because that son of a bitch Napoléon Barbiche…
They put Aldington on Hill 70, in a trench
dug through corpses
With a lot of kids of sixteen,
Howling and crying for their mamas,
And he sent a chit back to his major:
I can hold out for ten minutes
With my sergeant and a machine-gun.
And they rebuked him for levity.
And Henri Gaudier went to it,
and they killed him,

And killed a good deal of sculpture,
And ole T.E.H. he went to it,
With a lot of books from the library,
London Library, and a shell buried 'em in a dug-out,
And the Library expressed its annoyance.
            And a bullet hit him on the elbow
...gone through the fellow in front of him,
And he read Kant in the Hospital, in Wimbledon,
in the original,
And the hospital staff didn't like it.

And Wyndham Lewis went to it,
With a heavy bit of artillery,
            and the airmen came by with a mitrailleuse,
And cleaned out most of his company,
            and a shell lit on his tin hut,
While he was out in the privy,
            and he was all there was left of that outfit.

Windeler went to it,
  and he was out in the Ægæan,
And down in the hold of his ship
            pumping gas into a sausage,
And the boatswain looked over the rail,
            down into amidships, and he said:
            Gees! look a' the Kept'n,
The Kept'n's a-gettin' 'er up.

And Ole Captain Baker went to it,
             with his legs full of rheumatics,
So much so he couldn't run,
              so he was six months in hospital,
Observing the mentality of the patients.

And Fletcher was 19 when he went to it,
And his major went mad in the control pit,
      about midnight, and started throwing the 'phone about
And he had to keep him quiet
            till abut six in the morning,
And direct that bunch of artillery.

And Ernie Hemingway went to it,

too much in a hurry,
And they buried him for four days.

Et ma foi, vous savez,
tous les nerveux. Non,
Y a une limite; les bêtes, les bêtes ne sont
Pas faites pour ça, c'est peu de chose un cheval.
Les hommes de 34 ans à quatre pattes
qui criaient "maman." Mais les costauds,
La fin, là à Verdun, n'y avait que ces gros bonshommes
Et y voyaient extrêmement clair.
Qu'est-ce que ça vaut, les généraux, le lieutenant,
on les pèse à un centigramme,
n'y a rien que du bois,
Notr' capitaine, tout, tout ce qu'il y a de plus renfermé
de vieux polytechnicien, mais solide,
La tête solide. Là, vous savez,
Tout, tout fonctionne, et les voleurs, tous les vices,
Mais les rapaces,
y avait trois dans notre compagnie, tous tués.
Y sortaient fouiller un cadavre, pour rien,
y n'serainet sortis pour rien que ça.
Et les boches, tout ce que vous voulez,
militarisme, et cætera, et cætera.
Tout ça, mais, MAIS,
l'français, i s'bat quand y a mangé.
Mais ces pauvres types
A la fin y s'attaquaient pour manger,
Sans orders, les bêtes sauvages, on y fait
Prisonniers; ceux qui parlaient français disaient:
"Poo quah? Ma foi on attaquait pour manger."

C'est le corr-ggras, le corps gras,
leurs trains marchaient trois kilomètres à l'heure,
Et ça criait, ça grincait, on l'entendait à cinq kilomètres.
(Ça qui finit la guerre.)

Liste officielle des morts 5,000,000.

I vous dit, bè, voui, tout sentait le pétrole.
Mais, Non! je l'ai engueulé.
Je lui ai dit: T'es un con! T'a raté la guerre.

O voui! tous les homes de goût, y conviens,
Tout ça en arrière.
Mais un mec comme toi!
C't homme, un type comme ça!
Ce qu'il aurait pu encaisser!
Il était dans une fabrique.
What, burying squad, terrassiers, avec leur tête
en arrière, qui regardaient comme ça,
On risquait la vie pour un coup de pelle,
Faut que ça soit bein carré, exact…

Dey vus a bolcheviki dere, und dey dease him:
Looka vat youah Trotzsk is done, e iss
madeh deh zhamefull beace!!
"He iss madeh de zhamefull beace, iss he?
"He is madeh de zhamevull beace?
"A Brest-Litovsk, yess? Aint yuh herd?
"He vinneh de vore.
"De droobs iss released vrom de eastern vront, yess?
"Un venn dey getts to deh vestern vront, iss it
"How many getts dere?
"And dose doat getts dere iss so full off revolutions
"Venn deh vrench is come dhru, yess,
"Dey say, "Vot?" Un de posch say:
"Aint yeh heard? Say, ve got a rheffolution."

That's the trick with a crowd,
Get 'em into the street and get 'em moving.
And all the time, there were people going
Down there, over the river.

There was a man there talking,
To a thousand, just a short speech, and
Then move 'em on. And he said:
Yes, these people, they are all right, they
Can do everything, everything except act;
And go an' hear 'em but when they are through
Come to the bolsheviki…

And when it broke, there was the crowd there,
And the cossacks, just as always before,

But one thing, the cossacks said:
"Pojalouista."
And that got round in the crowd,
And then a lieutenant of infantry
Ordered ‘em to fire into the crowd,
in the square at the end of the Nevsky,
In front of the Moscow station,
And they wouldn't,
And he pulled his sword on a student for laughing,
And killed him,
And a cossack rode out of his squad
On the other side of the square
And cut down the lieutenant of infantry
And there was the revolution…
as soon as they named it.

And you can't make ‘em,
Nobody knew it was coming. They were all ready, the old gang,
Guns on the top of the post-office and the palace,
But none of the leaders knew it was coming.

And there were some killed at the barracks,
But that was between the troops.

So we used to hear it at the opera
That they wouldn't be under Haig;
and that the advance was beginning;
That it was going to begin in a week.

Ezra Pound

Canto XXXVI

A Lady asks me
            I speak in season
She seeks reason for an affect, wild often
That is so proud he hath Love for a name
Who denys it can hear the truth now
Wherefore I speak to the present knowers
Having no hope that low-hearted
           Can bring sight to such reason
Be there not natural demonstration
            I have no will to try proof-bringing
Or say where it hath birth
What is its virtu and power
Its being and every moving
Or delight whereby 'tis called "to love"
Or if man can show it to sight.

Where memory liveth,
            it takes its state
Formed like a diafan from light on shade
Which shadow cometh of Mars and remaineth
Created, having a name sensate,
Custom of the soul,
            will from the heart;
Cometh from a seen form which being understood
Taketh locus and remaining in the intellect possible
Wherein hath he neither weight nor still-standing,
Descendeth not by quality but shineth out
Himself his own effect unendingly
Not in delight but in the being aware
Nor can he leave his true likeness otherwhere.

He is not vertu but cometh of that perfection
Which is so postulate not by the reason
But 'tis felt, I say.
Beyond salvation, holdeth his judging force
Deeming intention to be reason's peer and mate,
Poor in discernment, being thus weakness' friend
Often his power cometh on death in the end,
Be it withstayed

and so swinging counterweight.
Not that it were natural opposite, but only
Wry'd a bit from the perfect,
Let no man say love cometh from chance
Or hath not established lordship
Holding his power even though
Memory hath him no more.

Cometh he to be
when the will
From overplus
Twisteth out of natural measure,
Never adorned with rest Moveth he changing colour
Either to laugh or weep
Contorting the face with fear
resteth but a little
Yet shall ye see of him That he is most often
With folk who deserve him
And his strange quality sets sighs to move
Willing man look into that forméd trace in his mind
And with such uneasiness as rouseth the flame.
Unskilled can not form his image,
He himself moveth not, drawing all to his stillness,
Neither turneth about to seek his delight
Nor yet to see out proving
Be it so great or so small.

He draweth likeness and hue from like nature
So making pleasure more certain in seeming
Nor can stand hid in such nearness,
Beautys be darts tho' not savage
Skilled from such fear a man follows
Deserving spirit, that pierceth.
Nor is he known from his face
But taken in the white light that is allness
Toucheth his aim
Who heareth, seeth not form
But is led by its emanation
Being divided, set out from colour,
Disjunct in mid darkness
Grazeth the light, one moving by other,
Being divided, divided from all falsity

Worthy of trust
From him alone mercy proceedeth.

Go, song, surely thou mayest
Whither it please thee
For so art thou ornate that thy reasons
Shall be praised from thy understanders,
With others hast thou no will to make company.

"Called thrones, balascio or topaze"
Eriugina was not understood in his time
"which explains, perhaps, the delay in condemning him"
And they went looking for Manicheans
And found, so far as I can make out, no Manicheans
So they dug for, and damned Scotus Eriugina
"Authority comes from right reason,
never the other way on"
Hence the delay in condemning him
Aquinas head down in a vacuum,
Aristotle which way in a vacuum?
Sacrum, sacrum, inluminatio coitu.
Lo Sordels si fo di Mantovana
of a castle named Goito.
"Five castles!
"Five castles!"
(king giv' him five castles)
"And what the hell do I know about dye-works?!"
His Holiness has written a letter:
"CHARLES the Mangy of Anjou….
..way you treat your men is a scandal…."
Dilectis miles familiaris…castra Montis Odorisii
Montis Sancti Silvestri pallete et pile…
In partibus Thetis….vineland
land tilled
the land incult
pratis nemoribus pascuis
with legal jurisdiction
his heirs of both sexes,
…sold the damn lot six weeks later,
Sordellus de Godio.
Quan ben m'albir e mon ric pensamen.

Cantus Planus

The black panther lies under his rose tree
And the fawns come to sniff at his sides:

Evoe, Evoe, Evoe Baccho, O
ZAGREUS, Zagreus, Zagreus,

The black panther lies under his rose tree.
|| Hesper adest. Hesper || adest.
Hesper || adest.

Ezra Pound

Causa

I join these words for four people,
Some others may overhear them,
O world, I am sorry for you,
You do not know these four people.

Ezra Pound

Cino

Italian Campagna 1309, the open road

Bah! I have sung women in three cities,
But it is all the same;
And I will sing of the sun.

Lips, words, and you snare them,
Dreams, words, and they are as jewels,
Strange spells of old deity,
Ravens, nights, allurement:
And they are not;
Having become the souls of song.

Eyes, dreams, lips, and the night goes.
Being upon the road once more,
They are not.
Forgetful in their towers of our tuneing
Once for wind-runeing
They dream us-toward and
Sighing, say, ``Would Cino,
Passionate Cino, of the wrinkling eyes,
Gay Cino, of quick laughter,
Cino, of the dare, the jibe.
Frail Cino, strongest of his tribe
That tramp old ways beneath the sun-light,
Would Cino of the Luth were here!''

Once, twice a year---
Vaguely thus word they:

``Cino?'' ``Oh, eh, Cino Polnesi
The singer is't you mean?''
``Ah yes, passed once our way,
A saucy fellow, but . . .
(Oh they are all one these vagabonds),
Peste! 'tis his own songs?
Or some other's that he sings?
But *you*, My Lord, how with your city?''

My you ``My Lord,'' God's pity!
And all I knew were out, My Lord, you
Were Lack-land Cino, e'en as I am,
O Sinistro.

I have sung women in three cities.
But it is all one.
I will sing of the sun.
. . . eh? . . . they mostly had grey eyes,
But it is all one, I will sing of the sun.

``'Pollo Phoibee, old tin pan, you
Glory to Zeus' aegis-day,
Shield o' steel-blue, th' heaven o'er us
Hath for boss thy lustre gay!

'Pollo Phoibee, to our way-fare
Make thy laugh our wander-lied;
Bid thy 'flugence bear away care.
Cloud and rain-tears pass they fleet!

Seeking e'er the new-laid rast-way
To the gardens of the sun . . .

* * *

I have sung women in three cities
But it is all one.
I will sing of the white birds
In the blue waters of heaven,
The clouds that are spray to its sea."

Ezra Pound

Coda

O My songs,
Why do you look so eagerly and so curiously into
people's faces,
Will you find your lost dead among them?

Ezra Pound

Coitus

The gilded phaloi of the crocuses
are thrusting at the spring air.
Here is there naught of dead gods
But a procession of festival,
A procession, Giulio Romano,
Fit for your spirit to dwell in.
Dione, your nights are upon us.

The dew is upon the leaf.
The night about us is restless.

Ezra Pound

Come To My Cantilations

Come my cantilations,
Let us dump our hatreds into one bunch and be done with them,
Hot sun, clear water, fresh wind,
Let me be free of pavements,
Let me be free of the printers.
Let come beautiful people
Wearing raw silk of good colour,
Let come the graceful speakers,
Let come the ready of wit,
Let come the gay of manner, the insolent and the exulting.
We speak of burnished lakes,
Of dry air, as clear as metal.

Ezra Pound

Commission

Go, my songs, to the lonely and the unsatisfied,
Go also to the nerve-racked, go to the enslaved-by-convention,
Bear to them my contempt for their oppressors.
Go as a great wave of cool water,
Bear my contempt of oppressors.

Speak against unconscious oppression,
Speak against the tyranny of the unimaginative,
Speak against bonds.
Go to the bourgeoise who is dying of her ennuis,
Go to the women in suburbs.
Go to the hideously wedded,
Go to them whose failure is concealed,
Go to the unluckily mated,
Go to the bought wife,
Go to the woman entailed.

Go to those who have delicate lust,
Go to those whose delicate desires are thwarted,
Go like a blight upon the dulness of the world;
Go with your edge against this,
Strengthen the subtle cords,
Bring confidence upon the algae and the tentacles of the soul.
Go in a friendly manner,
Go with an open speech.
Be eager to find new evils and new good,
Be against all forms of oppression.
Go to those who are thickened with middle age,
To those who have lost their interest.

Go to the adolescent who are smothered in family-
Oh how hideous it is
To see three generations of one house gathered together!
It is like an old tree with shoots,
And with some branches rotted and falling.

Go out and defy opinion,
Go against this vegetable bondage of the blood.
Be against all sorts of mortmain.

Ezra Pound

Dance Figure

For the Marriage in Cana of Galilee

Dark-eyed,
O woman of my dreams,
Ivory sandalled,
There is none like thee among the dancers,
None with swift feet.
I have not found thee in the tents,
In the broken darkness.
I have not found thee at the well-head
Among the women with pitchers.
Thine arms are as a young sapling under the bark;
Thy face as a river with lights.

White as an almond are thy shoulders;
As new almonds stripped from the husk.
They guard thee not with eunuchs;
Not with bars of copper.

Gilt turquoise and silver are in the place of thy rest.
A brown robe, with threads of gold woven in
    patterns, hast thou gathered about thee,
O Nathat-Ikanaie, 'Tree-at-the-river'.

As a rillet among the sedge are thy hands upon me;
Thy fingers a frosted stream.

Thy maidens are white like pebbles;
Their music about thee!

There is none like thee among the dancers;
None with swift feet.

Ezra Pound

Dans Un Omnibus De Londres

Les yeux d'une morte
M'ont salué,
Enchassés dans un visage stupide
Dont tous les autres traits étaient banals,
Ils m'ont salué
Et alors je vis bien des choses
Au dedans de ma mémoire
Remuer,
S'éveiller.

Je vis des canards sur le bord d'un lac minuscule,
Auprè
s d'un petit enfant gai, bossu.
Je vis les colonnes anciennes en ctoc'
Du Pare Monceau,
Et deux petites filles graciles,
Des patriciennes,
aux toisons couleur de lin,
Et des pigeonnes
Grasses
comme des poulardes.
Je vis le pare,
Et tous les gazons divers
Ou nous avions loué des chaises
Pour quatre sous.

Je vis les cygnes noirs,
Japonais,
Leurs ailes
Teinté
es de couleur sang-de-dragon,
Et toutes les fleurs
D'Armenonville.
Les yeux d'une morte
M'ont salué.

Ezra Pound

De Ægypto

I even I, am he who knoweth the roads
Through the sky, and the wind thereof is my body.

I have beheld the Lady of Life,
I, even I, who fly with the swallows.

Green and gray is her raiment,
Trailing along the wind.

I, even I, am he who knoweth the roads
Through the sky, and the wind thereof is my body.

Manus animam pinxit,
My pen is in my hand

To write the acceptable word. . . .
My mouth to chant the pure singing!

Who hath the mouth to receive it,
The song of the Lotus of Kumi?

I, even I, am he who knoweth the roads
Through the sky, and the wind thereof is my body.

I am flame that riseth in the sun,
I, even I, who fly with the swallows.

The moon is upon my forehead,
The winds are under my lips.

The moon is a great pearl in the waters of sapphire,
Cool to my fingers the flowing waters.

I, even I, am he who knoweth the roads
Through the sky, and the wind thereof is my body.

Ezra Pound

Dieu! Qu'Il La Fait

FROM CHARLES D'ORLEANS
God! that mad'st her well regard her,
How she is so fair and bonny;
For the great charms that are upon her
Ready are all folks to reward her.

Who could part him from her borders
When spells are alway renewed on her?
God! that mad'st her well regard her,
How she is so fair and bonny.

From here to there to the sea's border,
Dame nor damsel there's not any
Hath of perfect charms so many.
Thoughts of her are of dream's order:
God! that mad'st her well regard her.

Ezra Pound

Dompna Pois De Me No'Us Cal

FROM THE PROVENCAL OF EN BERTRANS DE BORN
Lady, since you care nothing for me,
And since you have shut me away from you
Causelessly,
I know not wnere to go seeking,
For certainly
I will never again gather
Joy so rich, and if I find not ever
A lady with look so speaking
To my desire, worth yours whom I have lost,
I’ll have no other love at any cost.

And since I could not find a peer to you,
Neither one so fair, nor of such heart,
So eager and alert,
Nor with such art
In attire, nor so gay
Nor with gift so bountiful and so true,
I will go out a-searching,
Culling from each a fair trait
To make me a borrowed lady
Till I again find you ready.

Bels Cembelins, I take of you your colour,
For it's your own, and your glance
Where love is,
A proud thing I do here,
For, as to colour and eyes
I shall have missed nothing at all,
Having yours.
I ask of Midons Aelis (of Montfort)
Her straight speech free-running,
That my phantom lack not in cunning,

At Chalais of the Viscountess, I would
That she give me outright
Her two hands and her throat,
So take I my road
To Rochechouart,

Swift-foot to my Lady Anhes,
Seeing that Tristan's lady Iseutz had never
Such grace of locks, I do ye to wit,
Though she'd the far fame for it.

Of Audiart at Malemort,
Though she with a full heart
Wish me ill,
I'd have her form that's laced
So cunningly,
Without blemish, for her love
Breaks not nor turns aside.
I of Miels-de-ben demand
Her straight fresh body,
She is so supple and young,
Her robes can but do her wrong.

Her white teeth, of the Lady Faidita
I ask, and the fine courtesy
She hath to welcome one,
And such replies she lavishes
Within her nest;
Of Bels Mirals, the rest,
Tall stature and gaiety,
To make these avail
She knoweth well, betide
No change nor turning aside.

Ah, Bels Senher, Maent, at last
I ask naught from you,
Save that I have such hunger for
This phantom
As I've for you, such flame-lap,
And yet I'd rather
Ask of you than hold another,
Mayhap, right close and kissed.
Ah, lady, why have you cast
Me out, knowing you hold me so fast!

Ezra Pound

Donna Mi Prega

Because a lady asks me, I would tell
Of an affect that comes often and is fell
And is so overweening; Love by name.
E'en its deniers can now hear the truth,
I for the nonce to them that know it call,
Having no hope at all
that man who is base in heart
Can bear his part of wit
into the light of it,
And save they know't aright from nature's source
I have no will to prove Love's course
or say
Where he takes rest; who maketh him to be;
Or what his active virtu is, or what his force;
Nay, nor his very essence or his mode;
What his placation; why he is in verb,
Or if a man have might
To show him visible to men's sight.
In memory's locus taketh he his state Place
Formed there in manner as a mist of light
Upon a dusk that is come from Mars and stays.
Love is created, hath a sensate name,
His modus takes from soul, from heart his will;
From form seen doth he start, that, understood,
Taketh in latent intellect
As in a subject ready
place and abode,
Yet in that place it ever is unstill,
Spreading its rays, it tendeth never down
By quality, but is its own effect unendingly
Not to delight, but in an ardour of thought
That the base likeness of it kindleth not.
It is not virtu, but perfection's source
Lying within perfection postulate
Not by the reason, but 'tis felt, I say.
Beyond salvation, holdeth its judging force,
Maintains intention reason's peer and mate;
Poor in discernment, being thus weakness' friend,
Often his power meeteth with death in the end

Be he withstayed
or from true course
bewrayed
E'en though he meet not with hate or villeiny
Save that perfection fails, be it but a little;
Nor can man say he hath his life by chance
Or that he hath not stablished seigniory
Or loseth power, e'en lost to memory.

He comes to be and is when will's so great
It twists itself from out all natural measure;
Leisure s adornment puts he then never on,
Never thereafter, but moves changing state,
Moves changing colour, or to laugh or weep
Or wries the face with fear and little stays,
Yea, resteth little
yet is found the most
Where folk of worth be host.
And his strange property sets sighs to move
And wills man look into unformed space
Rousing there thirst
that breaketh into flame.
None can imagine love
that knows not love;
Love doth not move, but draweth all to him;
Nor doth he turn
for a whim
to find delight
Nor to seek out, surely,
great knowledge or slight.
Look drawn from like,
delight maketh certain in seeming
Nor can in covert cower,
beauty so near,
Not yet wild-cruel as darts,
So hath man craft from fear
in such his desire
To follow a noble spirit,
edge, that is, and point to the dart,
Though from her face indiscernible;
He, caught, falleth
plumb the spike of the targe.

Who well proceedeth, form not seeth,
following his own emanation.
There, beyond colour, essence set apart,
In midst of darkness light light giveth forth
Beyond all falsity, worthy of faith, alone
That in him solely is compassion born.

Safe may'st thou go my canzon whither thee pleaseth
Thou art so fair attired that every man and each
Shall praise thy speech
So we have sense or glow with reason's fire,
To stand with other
hast thou no desire.

Ezra Pound

Dum Capitolium Scandet

How many will come after me
singing as well as I sing, none better;
Telling the heart of their truth
as I have taught them to tell it;
Fruit of my seed,
O my unnameable children.
Know then that I loved you from afore-time,
Clear speakers, naked in the sun, untrammelled.

Ezra Pound

E.P. Ode Pour L'Election De Son Sepulchre

For three years, out of key with his time,
He strove to resuscitate the dead art
Of poetry; to maintain "the sublime"
In the old sense. Wrong from the start--

No, hardly, but seeing he had been born
In a half savage country, out of date;
Bent resolutely on wringing lilies from the acorn;
Capaneus; trout for factitious bait;

Idmen gar toi panth, hos eni troie
Caught in the unstopped ear;
Giving the rocks small lee-way
The chopped seas held him, therefore, that year.

His true Penelope was Flaubert,
He fished by obstinate isles;
Observed the elegance of Circe's hair
Rather than the mottoes on sun-dials.

Unaffected by "the march of events,"
He passed from men's memory in l'an trentuniesme
de son eage;the case presents
No adjunct to the Muses' diadem.

II
The age demanded an image
Of its accelerated grimace,
Something for the modern stage
Not, at any rate, an Attic grace;

Not, certainly, the obscure reveries
Of the inward gaze;
Better mendacities
Than the classics in paraphrase!

The "age demanded" chiefly a mould in plaster,
Made with no loss of time,
A prose kinema, not, not assuredly, alabaster

Or the "sculpture" of rhyme.

III
The tea-rose tea-gown, etc.
Supplants the mousseline of Cos,
The pianola "replaces"
Sappho's barbitos.

Christ follows Dionysus,
Phallic and ambrosial
Made way for macerations;
Caliban casts out Ariel.

All things are a flowing
Sage Heracleitus say;
But a tawdry cheapness
Shall outlast our days.

Even the Christian beauty
Defects--after Samothrace;
We see to kalon
Decreed in the market place.

Faun's flesh is not to us,
Nor the saint's vision.
We have the press for wafer;
Franchise for circumcision.

All men, in law, are equals.
Free of Pisistratus,
We choose a knave or an eunuch
To rule over us.

O bright Apollo,
Tin andra, tin heroa, tina theon,
What god, man or hero
Shall I place a tin wreath upon!

IV
These fought in any case,
And some believing,
                                        pro domo, in any case...

Some quick to arm,
some for adventure,
some from fear of weakness,
some from fear of censure,
some for love of slaughter, in imagination,
learning later...
some in fear, learning love of slaughter;

Died some, pro patria,
non "dulce" not "et decor"...
walked eye-deep in hell
believing old men's lies, then unbelieving
came home, home to a lie,
home to many deceits,
home to old lies and new infamy;
usury age-old and age-thick
and liars in public places.

Daring as never before, wastage as never before.
Young blood and high blood,
fair cheeks, and fine bodies;

fortitude as never before

frankness as never before,
disillusions as never told in the old days,
hysterias, trench confessions,
laughter out of dead bellies.

V
There died a myriad,
And of the best, among them,
For an old bitch gone in the teeth,
For a botched civilization,

Charm, smiling at the good mouth,
Quick eyes gone under earth's lid,

For two gross of broken statues,
For a few thousand battered books.

Ezra Pound

Envoi

Go, dumb-born book,
Tell her that sang me once that song of Lawes:
Hadst thou but song
As thou hast subjects known,
Then were there cause in thee that should condone
Even my faults that heavy upon me lie
And build her glories their longevity.
Tell her that sheds
Such treasure in the air,
Recking naught else but that her graces give
Life to the moment,
I would bid them live
As roses might, in magic amber laid,
Red overwrought with orange and all made
One substance and one colour
Braving time.
Tell her that goes
With song upon her lips
But sings not out the song, nor knows
The maker of it, some other mouth,
May be as fair as hers,
Might, in new ages, gain her worshippers,
When our two dusts with Waller's shall be laid,
Siftings on siftings in oblivion,
Till change hath broken down
All things save Beauty alone.

Ezra Pound

Epilogue

O chansons foregoing
You were a seven days' wonder.
When you came out in the magazines
You created considerable stir in Chicago,
And now you are stale and worn out,
You're a very depleted fashion,
A hoop-skirt, a calash,
An homely, transient antiquity.
Only emotion remains.
Your emotions?
Are those of a maitre-de-cafe.

Ezra Pound

Epitaph

Leucis, who intended a Grand Passion,
Ends with a willingness-to-oblige.

Ezra Pound

Epitaphs

Fu I

Fu I loved the high cloud and the hill,
Alas, he died of alcohol.

Li Po

And Li Po also died drunk.
He tried to embrace a moon
In the Yellow River.

Ezra Pound

Erat Hora

'Thank you, whatever comes.' And then she turned
And, as the ray of sun on hanging flowers
Fades when the wind hath lifted them aside,
Went swiftly from me. Nay, whatever comes
One hour was sunlit and the most high gods
May not make boast of any better thing
Than to have watched that hour as it passed.

Ezra Pound

Exile’s Letter

To So-Kin of Rakuyo, ancient friend, Chancellor of
Gen.
Now I remember that you built me a special tavern
By the south side of the bridge at Ten-Shin.
With yellow gold and white jewels, we paid for songs
and laughter
And we were drunk for month on month, forgetting the
kings and princes.
Intelligent men came drifting in from the sea and from
the west border,
And with them, and with you especially
There was nothing at cross purpose,
And they made nothing of sea-crossing or of mountain-
crossing,
If only they could be of that fellowship,
And we all spoke out our hearts and minds, and without
regret.
And when I was sent off to South Wei,
smothered in laurel groves,
And you to the north of Raku-hoku,
Till we had nothing but thoughts and memories in
common.
And then, when separation had come to its worst,
We met, and travelled into Sen-Go,
Through all the thirty-six folds of the turning and
twisting waters,
Into a valley of the thousand bright flowers,
That was the first valley;
And into ten thousand valleys full of voices and pine-
winds.
And with silver harness and reins of gold,
Out came the East of Kan foreman and his company.
And there came also the ‘True man’ of Shi-yo to meet
me,
Playing on a jewelled mouth-organ.
In the storied houses of San-Ko they gave us more
Sennin music,
Many instruments, like the sound of young phoenix
broods.

The foreman of Kan Chu, drunk, danced
because his long sleeves wouldn't keep still
With that music playing,
And I, wrapped in brocade, went to sleep with my
head on his lap,
And my spirit so high it was all over the heavens,
And before the end of the day we were scattered like
stars, or rain.
I had to be off to So, far away over the waters,
You back to your river-bridge.

And your father, who was brave as a leopard,
Was governor in Hei Shu, and put down the barbarian
rabble.
And one May he had you send for me,
despite the long distance.
And what with broken wheels and so on, I won't say it
wasn't hard going,
Over roads twisted like sheep's guts.
And I was still going, late in the year,
in the cutting wind from the North,
And thinking how little you cared for the cost,
and you caring enough to pay it.
And what a reception:
Red jade cups, food well set on a blue jewelled table,
And I was drunk, and had no thought of returning.
And you would walk out with me to the western corner
of the castle,
To the dynastic temple, with water about it clear as
blue jade,
With boats floating, and the sound of mouth-organs and
drums,
With ripples like dragon-scales, going grass green on the
water,
Pleasure lasting, with courtezans, going and coming
without hindrance,
With the willow flakes falling like snow,
And the vermilioned girls getting drunk about sunset,
And the water, a hundred feet deep, reflecting green
eyebrows
Eyebrows painted green are a fine sight in young
moonlight,

Gracefully painted
And the girls singing back at each other,
Dancing in transparent brocade,
And the wind lifting the song, and interrupting it,
Tossing it up under the clouds.
And all this comes to an end.
And is not again to be met with.
I went up to the court for examination,
Tried Layu's luck, offered the Choyo song,
And got no promotion,
and went back to the East Mountains
White-headed.
And once again, later, we met at the South bridge-head.
And then the crowd broke up, you went north to San palace,
And if you ask how I regret that parting:
It is like the flowers falling at Spring's end
Confused, whirled in a tangle.
What is the use of talking, and there is no end of talking,
There is no end of things in the heart.
I call in the boy,
Have him sit on his knees here
To seal this,
And send it a thousand miles, thinking.

Ezra Pound

Ezra On The Strike

Wal, Thanksgivin' do be comin' round.
With the price of turkeys on the bound,
And coal, by gum! Thet were just found,
Is surely gettin' cheaper.

The winds will soon begin to howl,
And winter, in its yearly growl,
Across the medders begin to prowl,
And Jack Frost gettin' deeper.

By shucks! It seems to me,
That you I orter be
Thankful, that our Ted could see
A way to operate it.

I sez to Mandy, sure, sez I,
I'll bet thet air patch o' rye
Thet he'll squash 'em by-and-by,
And he did, by cricket!

No use talkin', he's the man -
One of the best thet ever ran,
Fer didn't I turn Republican
One o' the fust?

I 'lowed as how he'd beat the rest,
But old Si Perkins, he hemmed and guessed,
And sed as how it wuzn't best
To meddle with the trust.

Ezra Pound

Famam Librosque Cano

Your songs?
Oh! The little mothers
Will sing them in the twilight,
And when the night
Shrinketh the kiss of the dawn
That loves and kills,
What time the swallow fills
Here note, the little rabbit folk
That some call children,
Such as are up and wide,
Will laugh your verses to each other,
Pulling on their shoes for the day's business,
Serious child business that the world
Laughs at, and grows stale;
Such is the tale
-Part of it-of thy song-life.

Mine?

A book is known by them that read
That same. Thy public in my screed
Is listed. Well! Some score years hence
Behold mine audience,
As we had seen him yesterday.

Scrawny, be-spectacled, out at heels,
Such an one as the world feels
A sort of curse against its guzzling
And its age-lasting wallow for red greed
And yet; full speed
Though it should run for its own getting,
Will turn aside to sneer at
'Cause he hath
No coin, no will to snatch the aftermath
Of Mammon
Such an one as women draw away from
For the tobacco ashes scattered on his coat
And sith his throat
Show's razor's unfamiliarity

And three days' beard;

Such an one picking a ragged
Backless copy from the stall,
Too cheap for cataloguing,
Loquitur,

'Ah-eh! the strange rare name . . .
Ah-eh! He must be rare if even 7 have not . . .’
And lost mid-page
Such age
As his pardons the habit,
He analyses form and thought to see
How I 'scaped immortality.

Ezra Pound

Fan-Piece, For Her Imperial Lord

O fan of white silk,
clear as frost on the grass-blade,

You also are laid aside.

Ezra Pound

Fish And Shadow

The salmon-trout drifts in the stream,
The soul of the salmon-trout floats over the stream
Like a little wafer of light.

The salmon moves in the sun-shot, bright shallow sea. . . .

As light as the shadow of the fish
that falls through the water,
She came into the large room by the stair,
Yawning a little she came with the sleep still upon her.

'I am just from bed. The sleep is still in my eyes.
'Come. I have had a long dream.'
And I: That wood?
'And two springs have passed us.'
'Not so far, no, not so far now,
There is a place but no one else knows it
A field in a valley . . .
Qu'ieu sui avinen,
Ieu lo sai,'

She must speak of the time
Of Arnaut de Mareuil, I thought, 'qu'ieu sui avinen.'

Light as the shadow of the fish
That falls through the pale green water.

Ezra Pound

For E. Mcc

Gone while your tastes were keen to you,
Gone where the grey winds call to you,
By that high fencer, even Death,
Struck of the blade that no man parrieth;
Such is your fence, one saith,
One that hath known you.
Drew you your sword most gallantly
Made you your pass most valiantly
'Gainst that grey fencer, even Death.

Gone as a gust of breath
Faith! no man tarrieth,
‘Se il cor ti manca,’ but it failed thee not!
'Non ti fidar,’ it is the sword that speaks
‘In me.’

Thou trusted'st in thyself and met the blade
'Thout mask or gauntlet, and art laid
As memorable broken blades that be
Kept as bold trophies of old pageantry.
As old Toledos past their days of war
Are kept mnemonic of the strokes they bore,
So art thou with us, being good to keep
In our heart's sword-rack, though thy sword-arm sleep.

ENVOI
Struck of the blade that no man parrieth
Pierced of the point that toucheth lastly all,
'Gainst that grey fencer, even Death,
Behold the shield! He shall not take thee all.

Ezra Pound

Francesca

You came in out of the night
And there were flowers in your hand,
Now you will come out of a confusion of people,
Out of a turmoil of speech about you.

I who have seen you amid the primal things
Was angry when they spoke your name
IN ordinary places.
I would that the cool waves might flow over my mind,
And that the world should dry as a dead leaf,
Or as a dandelion see-pod and be swept away,
So that I might find you again,
Alone.

Ezra Pound

Fratres Minores

With minds still hovering above their testicles
Certain poets here and in France
Still sigh over established and natural fact
Long since fully discussed by Ovid.
They howl. They complain in delicate and exhausted metres
That the twitching of three abdominal nerves
Is incapable of producing a lasting Nirvana.

Ezra Pound

From "Hugh Selwyn Mauberly"

For three years, out of key with his time,
He strove to resuscitate the dead art
Of poetry; to maintain "the sublime"
In the old from the start--

No, hardly, but seeing he had been born
In a half-savage country, out of date;
Bent resolutely on wringing lilies from the acorn;
Capaneus; trout for factitious bait;

[idmen gar toi pant, hos eni Troiei]
Caught in the unstopped ear;
Giving the rocks small lee-way
The chopped seas held him, therefore, that year.

His true Penelope was Flaubert,
He fished by obstinate isles;
Observed the elegance of Circe's hair
Rather than the mottoes on sun-dials.

Unaffected by "the march of events,"
He passed from men's memory in l'an trentuniesme
De son eage; the case presents
No adjunct to the Muses' diadem.

Ezra Pound

Further Instructions

Come, my songs, let us express our baser passions.
Let us express our envy for the man with a steady job and no worry about the future.
You are very idle, my songs,
I fear you will come to a bad end.
You stand about the streets, You loiter at the corners and bus-stops,
You do next to nothing at all.

You do not even express our inner nobilitys,
You will come to a very bad end.

And I? I have gone half-cracked.
I have talked to you so much that I almost see you about me,
Insolent little beasts! Shameless! Devoid of clothing!

But you, newest song of the lot,
You are not old enough to have done much mischief.
I will get you a green coat out of China
With dragons worked upon it.
I will get you the scarlet silk trousers
From the statue of the infant Christ at Santa Maria Novella;
Lest they say we are lacking in taste,
Or that there is no caste in this family.

Ezra Pound

Gentildonna

She passed and left no quiver in the veins, who now
Moving among the trees, and clinging
in the air she severed,
Fanning the grass she walked on then, endures:
Grey olive leaves beneath a rain-cold sky.

Ezra Pound

Grace Before Song

Lord God of heaven that with mercy dight
Th'alternate prayer wheel of the night and light
Eternal hath to thee, and in whose sight
Our days as rain drops in the sea surge fall,

As bright white drops upon a leaden sea
Grant so my songs to this grey folk may be:

As drops that dream and gleam and falling catch the sun
Evan'scent mirrors every opal one
Of such his splendor as their compass is,
So, bold My Songs, seek ye such death as this.

Ezra Pound

Guido Invites You Thus

'Lappo I leave behind and Dante too,
Lo, I would sail the seas with thee alone!
Talk me no love talk, no bought-cheap fiddl'ry,
Mine is the ship and thine the merchandise,
All the blind earth knows not th'emprise
Whereto thou calledst and whereto I call.

Lo, I have seen thee bound about with dreams,
Lo, I have known thy heart and its desire;
Life, all of it, my sea, and all men's streams
Are fused in it as flames of an altar fire !
Lo, thou hast voyaged not! The ship is mine.'

Ezra Pound

Heather

The black panther treads at my side,
And above my fingers
There float the petal-like flames.

The milk-white girls
Unbend from the holly-trees,
And their snow-white leopard
Watches to follow our trace.

Ezra Pound

Her Monument, The Image Cut Thereon

FROM THE ITALIAN OF LEOPARDI

Such wast thou,
Who art now
But buried dust and rusted skeleton.
Above the bones and mire,
Motionless, placed in vain,
Mute mirror of the flight of speeding years,
Sole guard of grief
Sole guard of memory
Standeth this image of the beauty sped.

O glance, when thou wast still as thou art now,
How hast thou set the fire
A-tremble in men's veins; lip curved high
To mind me of some urn of full delight,
O throat girt round of old with swift desire,
O palms of Love, that in your wonted ways
Not once but many a day
Felt hands turn ice a-sudden, touching ye,
That ye were once! of all the grace ye had
That which remaineth now
Shameful, most sad
Finds 'neath this rock fit mould, fit resting place!

And still when fate recalleth,
Even that semblance that appears amongst us
Is like to heaven's most 'live imagining.
All, all our life's eternal mystery!
To-day, on high
Mounts, from our mighty thoughts and from the fount
Of sense untellable, Beauty
That seems to be some quivering splendour cast
By the immortal nature on this quicksand,

And by surhuman fates
Given to mortal state
To be a sign and an hope made secure
Of blissful kingdoms and the aureate spheres;

And on the morrow, by some lightsome twist,
Shameful in sight, abject, abominable
All this angelic aspect can return
And be but what it was
With all the admirable concepts that moved from it
Swept from the mind with it in its departure.

Infinite things desired, lofty visions
'Got on desirous thoughts by natural virtue,
And the wise concord, whence through delicious seas
The arcane spirit of the whole Mankind
Turns hardy pilot . . . and if one wrong note
Strike the tympanum,
Instantly
That paradise is hurled to nothingness.

O mortal nature,
If thou art
Frail and so vile in all,
How canst thou reach so high with thy poor sense;
Yet if thou art
Noble in any part
How is the noblest of thy speech and thought
So lightly wrought
Or to such base occasion lit and quenched?

Ezra Pound

Historion

No man hath dared to write this thing as yet,
And yet I know, how that the souls of all men great
At times pass athrough us,
And we are melted into them, and are not
Save reflexions of their souls.
Thus am I Dante for a space and am
One Francois Villon, ballad-lord and thief,
Or am such holy ones I may not write
Lest blasphemy be writ against my name;
This for an instant and the flame is gone.

'Tis as in midmost us there glows a sphere
Translucent, molten gold, that is the "I"
And into this some form projects itself:
Christus, or John, or eke the Florentine;
And as the clear space is not if a form's
Imposed thereon,
So cease we from all being for the time,
And these, the Masters of the Soul, live on.

Ezra Pound

Histrion

No man hath dared to write this thing as yet,
And yet I know, how that the souls of all men great
At times pass athrough us,
And we are melted into them, and are not
Save reflexions of their souls.
Thus am I Dante for a space and am
One Francois Villon, ballad-lord and thief,
Or am such holy ones I may not write
Lest blasphemy be writ against my name;
This for an instant and the flame is gone.

'Tis as in midmost us there glows a sphere
Translucent, molten gold, that is the "I"
And into this some form projects itself:
Christus, or John, or eke the Florentine;
And as the clear space is not if a form's
Imposed thereon,
So cease we from all being for the time,
And these, the Masters of the Soul, live on.

Ezra Pound

Homage To Quintus Septimus Florentis Christianus

I
(Ex libris Graecæ)
Theodorus will be pleased at my death,
And .someone else will be pleased at the death of Theodoras,
And yet everyone speaks evil of death.

II
This place is the Cyprian's for she has ever the fancy
To be looking out across the bright sea,
Therefore the sailors are cheered, and the waves
Keep small with reverence, beholding her image.
Anyte

III
A sad and great evil is the expectation of death
And there are also the inane expenses of the funeral;
Let us therefore cease from pitying the dead
For after death there comes no other calamity.
Palladas

IV
Troy
Whither, O city, are your profits and your gilded shrines,
And your barbecues of great oxen,
And the tall women walking your streets, in gilt clothes,
With their perfumes in little alabaster boxes?
Where is the work of your home-born sculptors?

Time's tooth is into the lot, and war's and fate's too.
Envy has taken your all,
Save your douth and your story.
Agathas Scholasticus

V
Woman? Oh, woman is a consummate rage,
but dead, or asleep, she pleases.
Take her. She has two excellent seasons.
Palladas
VI

Nicharcus upon Phidon his doctor

Phidon neither purged me, nor touched me,
But I remembered the name of his fever medicine and
died.

Ezra Pound

Homage To Sextus Propertius - I

Shades of Callimachus, Coan ghosts of Philetas
It is in your grove I would walk,
I who come first from the clear font
Bringing the Grecian orgies into Italy,
and the dance into Italy.
Who hath taught you so subtle a measure,
in what hall have you heard it;
What foot beat out your time-bar,
what water has mellowed your whistles ?

Out-weariers of Apollo will, as we know, continue their
Martian generalities,
We have kept our erasers in order.
A new-fangled chariot follows the flower-hung horses;
A young Muse with young loves clustered about her
ascends with me into the aether, . . .
And there is no high-road to the Muses.

Annalists will continue to record Roman reputations,
Celebrities from the Trans-Caucasus will belaud Roman celebrities
And expound the distentions of Empire,
But for something to read in normal circumstances?
For a few pages brought down from the forked hill unsullied?
I ask a wreath which will not crush my head.
And there is no hurry about it;
I shall have, doubtless, a boom after my funeral,
Seeing that long standing increases all things
regardless of quality.
And who would have known the towers
pulled down by a deal-wood horse;
Or of Achilles withstaying waters by Simois
Or of Hector spattering wheel-rims,
Or of Polydmantus, by Scamander, or Helenas and
Deiphoibos?
Their door-yards would scarcely know them, or Paris.
Small talk O Ilion, and O Troad
twice taken by Oetian gods,
If Homer had not stated your case!

And I also among the later nephews of this city
shall have my dog's day,
With no stone upon my contemptible sepulchre;
My vote coming from the temple of Phoebus in Lycia, at Patara,
And in the mean time my songs will travel,
And the devirginated young ladies will enjoy them
when they have got over the strangeness,
For Orpheus tamed the wild beasts
and held up the Threician river;
And Citharaon shook up the rocks by Thebes
and danced them into a bulwark at his pleasure,
And you, O Polyphemus? Did harsh Galatea almost
Turn to your dripping horses, because of a tune, under Aetna?
We must look into the matter.
Bacchus and Apollo in favour of it,
There will be a crowd of young women doing homage to my palaver,
Though my house is not propped up by Taenarian
columns from Laconia (associated with Neptune and Cerberus),
Though it is not stretched upon gilded beams;
My orchards do not lie level and wide
as the forests of Phaecia,
the luxurious and Ionian,
Nor are my caverns stuffed stiff with a Marcian vintage,
My cellar does not date from Numa Pompilius,
Nor bristle with wine jars,
Nor is it equipped with a frigidaire patent;
Yet the companions of the Muses
will keep their collective nose in my books,
And weary with historical data, they will turn to my dance tune.
Happy who are mentioned in my pamphlets,
the songs shall be a fine tomb-stone over their beauty.
But against this ?
Neither expensive pyramids scraping the stars in their route,
Nor houses modelled upon that of Jove in East Elis,
Nor the monumental effigies of Mausolus,
are a complete elucidation of death.

Flame burns, rain sinks into the cracks
And they all go to rack ruin beneath the thud of the years.
Stands genius a deathless adornment,
a name not to be worn out with the years.

Homage To Sextus Propertius - Ii

I had been seen in the shade, recumbent on cushioned Helicon,
The water dripping from Bellerophon's horse,
Alba, your kings, and the realm your folk
have constructed with such industry
Shall be yawned out on my lyre with such industry.
My little mouth shall gobble in such great fountains,
'Wherefrom father Ennius, sitting before I came, hath drunk.'
I had rehearsed the Curian brothers, and made remarks
on the Horatian javelin
(Near Q. H. Flaccus' book-stall).
'Of' royal Aemilia, drawn on the memorial raft,
'Of' the victorious delay of Fabius, and the left-handed
battle at Cannae,
Of lares fleeing the 'Roman seat' . . .
I had sung of all these
And of Hannibal,
and of Jove protected by geese.
And Phoebus looking upon me from the Castalian tree,
Said then 'You idiot! What are you doing with that water:
'Who has ordered a book about heroes?
'You need, Propertius, not think
'About acquiring that sort of a reputation.
'Soft fields must be worn by small wheels,
'Your pamphlets will be thrown, thrown often into a chair
'Where a girl waits alone for her lover;
'Why wrench your page out of its course?
'No keel will sink with your genius
'Let another oar churn the water,
'Another wheel, the arena; mid-crowd is as bad as mid-sea.'
He had spoken, and pointed me a place with his plectrum:

Orgies of vintages, an earthern image of Silenus
Strengthened with rushes, Tegaean Pan,
The small birds of the Cytharean mother,
their Punic faces dyed in the Gorgon's lake;
Nine girls, from as many countrysides

bearing her offerings in their unhardened hands,
Such my cohort and setting. And she bound ivy to his thyrsos;

Fitted song to the strings;
Roses twined in her hands.
And one among them looked at me with face offended,
Calliope:
'Content ever to move with white swans!
'Nor will the noise of high horses lead you ever to battle;
Nor will the public criers ever have your name;
in their classic horns,
'Nor Mars shout you in the wood at Aeonium,
Nor where Rome ruins German riches,
'Nor where the Rhine flows with barbarous blood,
and flood carries wounded Suevi.
'Obviously crowned lovers at unknown doors,
'Night dogs, the marks of a drunken scurry,
'These are your images, and from you the sorcerizing of
shut-in young ladies,
'The wounding of austere men by chicane.'
Thus Mistress Calliope,
Dabbling her hands in the fount, thus she
Stiffened our face with the backwash of Philetas the Coan.

Ezra Pound

Homage To Sextus Propertius - Iii

Midnight, and a letter comes to me from our mistress:
Telling me to come to Tibur:
At once!!
'Bright tips reach up from twin towers,
'Anienan spring water falls into flat-spread pools.'

What is to be done about it?
Shall I entrust myself to entangled shadows,
Where bold hands may do violence to my person?
Yet if I postpone my obedience
because of this respectable terror,
I shall be prey to lamentations worse than a nocturnal assailant.
And I shall be in the wrong,
it will last a twelve month,
For her hands have no kindness me-ward,

Nor is there anyone to whom lovers are not sacred at midnight
And in the Via Sciro.
If any man would be a lover
he may walk on the Scythian coast,
No barbarism would go to the extent of doing him harm,
The moon will carry his candle,
and the stars will point out the stumbles,
Cupid will carry lighted torches before him
and keep mad dogs off his ankles.
Thus all roads are perfectly safe
and at any hour;
Who so indecorous as to shed the pure gore of a suitor?!
Cypris is his cicerone.

What if undertakers follow my track,
such a death is worth dying.
She would bring frankincense and wreaths to my tomb,
She would sit like an ornament on my pyre.

aid, let not my bones lie in a public location
With crowds too assiduous in their crossing of it;
For thus are tombs of lovers most desecrated.

May a woody and sequestered place cover me with its foliage
Or may I inter beneath the hummock
of some as yet uncatalogued sand;
At any rate I shall not hav.e my epitaph in a high road.

Ezra Pound

Homage To Sextus Propertius - Iv

DIFFERENCE OF OPINION WITH
LYGDAMUS

Tell me the truths which you hear of our constant young lady,
Lygdamus,
And may the bought yoke of a mistress lie with
equitable weight on your shoulders;
For I am swelled up with inane pleasurabilities
and deceived by your reference
To things which you think I would like to believe.

No messenger should come wholly empty,
and a slave should fear plausibilities;
Much conversation is as good as having a home.
Out with it, tell it to me, all of it, from the beginning,
I guzzle with outstretched ears.
Thus? She wept into uncombed hair,
And you saw it.
Vast waters flowed from her eyes ?
You, you Lygdamus
Saw her stretched on her bed,
was no glimpse in a mirror;
No gawds on her snowy hands, no orfevrerie,
Sad garment draped on her slender arms.
Her escritoires lay shut by the bed-feet.
Sadness hung over the house, and the desolated female attendants
Were desolated because she had told them her dreams.

She was veiled in the midst of that place,
Damp woolly handkerchiefs were stuffed into her undryable eyes,
And a querulous noise responded to our solicitous reprobations.
For which things you will get a reward from me, Lygdamus?
To say many things is equal to having a home.
And the other woman 'has not enticed me
by her pretty manners,
'She has caught me with herbaceous poison,
she twiddles the spiked wheel of a rhombus,
'She stews puffed frogs, snake's bones, the moulted
'She stews puffed frogs, snake's bones, the moulted

feathers of screech owls,

'She binds me with ravvles of shrouds.
Black spiders spin in her bedl
'Let her lovers snore at her in the morning!
May the gout cramp up her feet!
'Does he like me to sleep here alone,
Lygdamus?
'Will he say nasty things at my funeral?'

And you expect me to believe this
after twelve months of discomfort ?

Ezra Pound

Homage To Sextus Propertius - Ix

1
The twisted rhombs ceased their clamour of accompaniment;
The scorched laurel lay in the fire-dust;
The moon still declined to descend out of heaven,

But the black ominous owl hoot was audible.

And one raft bears our fates
on the veiled lake towards Avernus
Sails spread on Cerulean waters, I would shed tears for two;
I shall live, if she continue in life,
If she dies, I shall go with her.
Great Zeus, save the woman,
or she will sit before your feet in a veil, and tell
out the long list of her troubles.

2
Persephone and Dis, Dis, have mercy upon her,
There are enough women in hell,
quite enough beautiful women,
lope, and Tyro, and Pasiphae, and the formal girls of Achaia,
And out of Troad, and from the Campania,
Death has his tooth in the lot,
Avernus lusts for the lot of them,
Beauty is not eternal, no man has perennial fortune,
Slow foot, or swift foot, death delays but for a season.
My light, light of my eyes,
you are escaped from great peril,
Go back to Great Dian's dances bearing suitable gifts,
Pay up your vow of night watches
to Dian goddess of virgins,
And unto me also pay debt:
The ten nights of your company you have promised me.

Ezra Pound

Homage To Sextus Propertius - V

1
Now if ever it is time to cleanse Helicon;
to lead Emathian horses afield,
And to name over the census of my chiefs in the Roman camp.
If I have not the faculty, 'The bare attempt would be praise-worthy.'
'In the things of similar magnitude
the mere will to act is sufficient.'
The primitive ages sang Venus,
the last sings of a tumult,
And I also will sing war when this matter of a girl is exhausted.
I with my beak hauled ashore would proceed in a more stately manner,
My Muse is eager to instruct me in a new gamut, or gambetto,
Up, up my soul, from your lowly cantilation,
put on a timely vigour.
Oh august Pierides! Now for a large-mouthed product.
Thus:
'The Euphrates denies its protection to the Parthian and
apologizes for Crassus,'
And 'It is, I think, India which now gives necks to your triumph,'
And so forth, Augustus. 'Virgin Arabia shakes in her inmost dwelling.'
If any land shrink into a distant seacoast,
it is a mere postponement of your domination.
And I shall follow the camp, I shall be duly celebrated
for singing the affairs of your cavalry.
May the fates watch over my day.

2
Yet you ask on what account I write so many love-lyrics
And whence this soft book comes into my mouth.
Neither Calliope nor Apollo sung these things into my ear,
My genius is no more than a girl.

If she with ivory fingers drive a tune through the lyre,
We look at the process.
How easy the moving fingers; if hair is mussed on her forehead,
If she goes in a gleam of Cos, in a slither of dyed stuff,
There is a volume in the matter; if her eyelids sink into sleep,
There are new jobs for the author;
And if she plays with me with her shirt off,

We shall construct many Iliads.
And whatever she does or says
We shall spin long yarns out of nothing.

Thus much the fates have allotted me, and if, Maecenas,
I were able to lead heroes into armour, I would not,
Neither would I warble of Titans, nor of Ossa
spiked onto Olympus,
Nor of causeways over Pelion,
Nor of Thebes in its ancient respectability,
nor of Homer's reputation in Pergamus,
Nor of Xerxes' two-barreled kingdom, nor of Remus and his royal family,
Nor of dignified Carthaginian characters,
Nor of Welsh mines and the profit Marus had out of them,
I should remember Caesar's affairs . . .
for a background,
Although Callimachus did without them,
and without Theseus,
Without an inferno, without Achilles attended of gods,
Without Ixion, and without the sons of Menoetius and
the Argo and without Jove's grave and the Titans.

And my ventricles do not palpitate to Caesarial ore rotundas,
Nor to the tune of the Phrygian fathers.
Sailor, of winds; a plowman, concerning his oxen;
Soldier, the enumeration of wounds; the sheep-feeder, of ewes;
We, in our narrow bed, turning aside from battles:
Each man where he can, wearing out the day in his manner.
3
It is noble to die of love, and honourable to remain
uncuckolded for a season.
And she speaks ill of light women,
and will not praise Homer
Because Helen's conduct is 'unsuitable'.

Ezra Pound

Homage To Sextus Propertius - Vi

When, when, and whenever death closes our eyelids,

Moving naked over Acheron
Upon the one raft, victor and conquered together,
Marius and Jugurtha together,
one tangle of shadows.
Caesar plots against India,
Tigris and Euphrates shall, from now on, flow at his bidding,
Tibet shall be full of Roman policemen,
The Parthians shall get used to our statuary
and acquire a Roman religion;
One raft on the veiled flood of Acheron,
Marius and Jugurtha together.
Nor at my funeral either will there be any long trail,
bearing ancestral lares and images;
No trumpets filled with my emptiness,
Nor shall it be on an Atalic bed;
The perfumed cloths shall be absent.
A small plebeian procession.
Enough, enough and in plenty
There will be three books at my obsequies
Which I take, my not unworthy gift, to Persephone.

You will follow the bare scarified breast
Nor will you be weary of calling my name, nor too weary
To place the last kiss on my lips
When the Syrian onyx is broken.

‘He who is now vacant dust
'Was once the slave of one passion:'
Give that much inscription
‘Death why tardily come?'

You, sometimes, will lament a lost friend,
For it is a custom:
This care for past men,

Since Adonis was gored in Idalia, and the Cytharean
Ran crying with out-spread hair,

In vain, you call back the shade,
In vain, Cynthia. Vain call to unanswering shadow,
Small talk comes from small bones.

Ezra Pound

Homage To Sextus Propertius - Vii

Me happy, night, night full of brightness;
Oh couch made happy by iny long delectations;
How many words talked out with abundant candles;
Struggles when the lights were taken away;
Now with bared breasts she wrestled against me,
Tunic spread in delay;
And she then opening my eyelids fallen in sleep,
Her lips upon them; and it was her mouth saying:
Sluggard!

In how many varied embraces, our changing arms,
Her kisses, how many, lingering on my lips.
'Turn not Venus into a blinded motion,
Eyes are the guides of love,
Paris took Helen naked coming from the bed of Menelaus,
Endymion's naked body, bright bait for Diana,'
such at least is the story.

While our fates twine together, sate we our eyes with love;
For long night comes upon you
and a day when no day returns.
Let the gods lay chains upon us
so that no day shall unbind them.

Fool who would set a term to love's madness,
For the sun shall drive with black horses,
earth shall bring wheat from barley,
The flood shall move toward the fountain
Ere love know moderations,
The fish shall swim in dry streams.
No, now while it may be, let not the fruit of life cease.
Dry wreaths drop their petals,
their stalks are woven in baskets,
To-day we take the great breath of lovers,
to-morrow fate shuts us in.

Though you give all your kisses
you give but few.

Nor can I shift my pains to other,
Hers will I be dead,
If she confer such nights upon me,
long is my life, long in years,
If she give me many,
God am I for the time.

Ezra Pound

Homage To Sextus Propertius - Viii

Jove, be merciful to that unfortunate woman
Or an ornamental death will be held to your debit,
The time is come, the air heaves in torridity,
The dry earth pants against the canicular heat,
But this heat is not the root of the matter:
She did not respect all the gods;
Such derelictions have destroyed other young ladies aforetime,
And what they swore in the cupboard
wind and wave scattered away.

Was Venus exacerbated by the existence of a comparable equal?
Is the ornamental goddess full of envy?
Have you contempted Juno's Pelasgian temples,
Have you denied Pallas good eyes ?
Or is it my tongue that wrongs you
with perpetual ascription of graces?
There comes, it seems, and at any rate
through perils, (so many) and of a vexed life,
The gentler hour of an ultimate day.

Io mooed the first years with averted head,
And now drinks Nile water like a god,
Ino in her young days fled pellmell out of Thebes,
Andromeda was offered to a sea-serpent
and respectably married to Perseus,

Callisto, disguised as a bear,
wandered through the Arcadian prairies
While a black veil was over her stars,
What if your fates are accelerated,
your quiet hour put forward,
You may find interment pleasing,

You will say that you succumbed to a danger identical,
charmingly identical, with Semele's,
And believe it, and she also will believe it,
being expert from experience,
And amid all the gloried and storied beauties of Maeonia
There shall be none in a better seat, not

one denying your prestige,

Now you may bear fate's stroke unperturbed,
Or Jove, harsh as he is, may turn aside your ultimate day.
Old lecher, let not Juno get wind of the matter,
Or perhaps Juno herself will go under,
If the young lady is taken?
There will be, in any case, a stir on Olympus.

Ezra Pound

Homage To Sextus Propertius - X

.Light, light of my eyes, at an exceeding late hour I was wandering,
And intoxicated,
and no servant was leading me,
And a minute crowd of small boys came from opposite,
I do not know what boys,
And I am afraid of numerical estimate,
And some of them shook little torches,
and others held onto arrows,
And the rest laid their chains upon me,
and they were naked, the lot of them,
And one of the lot was given to lust.

'That incensed female has consigned him to our pleasure.'
So spoke. And the noose was over my neck.
And another said 'Get him plumb in the middle!
'Shove along there, shove along!'
And another broke in upon this:
'He thinks that we are not gods,'
'And she has been waiting for the scoundrel,
and in a new Sidonian night cap,
And with more than Arabian odours,
God knows where he has been.
She could scarcely keep her eyes open
enter that much for his bail.
Get along now!'

We were coming near to the house,
and they gave another yank to my cloak,
And it was morning, and I wanted to see if she was alone and resting,
And Cynthia was alone in her bed.
I was stupefied.
I had never seen her looking so beautiful,
No, not when she was tunick'd in purple.

Such aspect was presented to me, me recently emerged from my visions,
You will observe that pure form has its value.

‘You are a very early inspector of mistresses.
‘Do you think I have adopted your habits?'

There were upon the bed no signs of a voluptuous encounter,
No signs of a second incumbent.

She continued:
'No incubus has crushed his body against me,
‘Though spirits are celebrated for adultery.
‘And I am going to the temple of Vesta . . .'
and so on.

Since that day I have had no pleasant nights.

Ezra Pound

Homage To Sextus Propertius - Xi

1
The harsh acts of your levity!
Many and many.
I am hung here, a scare-crow for lovers.

2
Escape! There is, O Idiot, no escape,
Flee if you like into Ranaus,
desire will follow you thither,
Though you heave into the air upon the gilded Pegasean back,
Though you had the feathery sandals of Perseus
To lift you up through split air,
The high tracks of Hermes would not afford you shelter.

Amor stands upon you, Love drives upon lovers,
a heavy mass on free necks.

It is our eyes you flee, not the city,
You do nothing, you plot inane schemes against me,
Languidly you stretch out the snare
with which I am already familiar,

And yet again, and newly rumour strikes on my ears.

Rumours of you throughout the city,
and no good rumour among them.

'You should not believe hostile tongues.
'Beauty is slander's cock-shy.
'All lovely women have known this,'
'Your glory is not outblotted by venom,'
'Phoebus our witness, your hands are unspotted.

A foreign lover brought down Helen's kingdom
and she was led back, living home;
The Cytharean brought low by Mars' lechery
reigns in respectable heavens, . . .

Oh, oh, and enough of this,

by dew-spread caverns,
The Muses clinging to the mossy ridges;
to the ledge of the rocks:
Zeus' clever rapes, in the old days,
combusted Semele's, of Io strayed.
Oh how the bird flew from Trojan rafters,
Ida has lain with a shepherd, she has slept between sheep.

Even there, no escape
Not the Hyrcanian seaboard, not in seeking the shore of Eos.

All things are forgiven for one night of your games. . . .
Though you walk in the Via Sacra, with a peacock's tail for a fan.

Ezra Pound

Homage To Sextus Propertius - Xii

Who, who will be the next man to entrust his girl to a friend?
Love interferes with fidelities;
The gods have brought shame on their relatives;
Each man wants the pomegranate for himself;
Amiable and harmonious people are pushed incontinent into duels,
A Trojan and adulterous person came to Menelaus under the rites of hospitium,
And there was a case in Colchis, Jason and that woman in Colchis;
And besides, Lynceus,
you were drunk.

Could you endure such promiscuity?
She was not renowned for fidelity;
But to jab a knife in my vitals, to have passed on a swig of poison,
Preferable, my dear boy, my dear Lynceus,
Comrade, comrade of my life, of my purse, of my person;
But in one bed, in one bed alone, my dear Lynceus
I deprecate your attendance;
I would ask a like boon of Jove.

And you write of Achelous, who contended with Hercules,
You write of Adrastus' horses and the funeral rites of Achenor,
And you will not leave off imitating Aeschylus.
Though you make a hash of Antimachus,
You think you are going to do Homer.
And still a girl scorns the gods,
Of all these young women
not one has enquired the cause of the world,
Nor the modus of lunar eclipses
Nor whether there be any patch left of us
After we cross the infernal ripples,
nor if the thunder fall from predestination;
Nor anything else of importance.

Upon the Actian marshes Virgil is Phoebus' chief of police,
He can tabulate Caesar's great ships.
He thrills to Ilian arms,
He shakes the Trojan weapons of Aeneas,
And casts stores on Lavinian beaches.

Make way, ye Roman authors,
clear the street, ye Greeks,
For a much larger Iliad is on the course of construction
(and to Imperial order)
Clear the streets, O ye Greeks!

And you also follow him 'neath Phrygian pine shade:
Thyrsis and Daphnis upon whittled reeds,
And how ten sins can corrupt young maidens;
Kids for a bribe and pressed udders,
Happy selling poor loves for cheap apples.

Tityrus might have sung the same vixen;
Corydon tempted Alexis,
Head farmers do likewise, and lying weary amid their oats
They get praise from tolerant Hamadryads.'
Go on, to Ascraeus' prescription, the ancient, respected, Wordsworthian:
‘A flat field for rushes, grapes grow on the slope.'
And behold me, small fortune left in my house.
Me, who had no general for a grandfather!
I shall triumph among young ladies of indeterminate character,
My talent acclaimed in their banquets,
I shall be honoured with yesterday's wreaths.
And the god strikes to the marrow.

Like a trained and performing tortoise,
I would make verse in your fashion, if she should command it,
With her husband asking a remission of sentence,
And even this infamy would not attract numerous readers
Were there an erudite or violent passion,
For the nobleness of the populace brooks nothing below its own altitude.
One must have resonance, resonance and sonority . . .
like a goose.

Varro sang Jason's expedition,
Varro, of his great passion Leucadia,
There is song in the parchment; Catullus the highly indecorous,
Of Lesbia, known above Helen;
And in the dyed pages of Calvus,
Calvus mourning Quintilia,
And but now Gallus had sung of Lycoris.
Fair, fairest Lycoris

The waters of Styx poured over the wound:
And now Propertius of Cynthia, taking his stand among these.

Ezra Pound

Horae Beatae Inscripto

How will this beauty, when I am far hence,
Sweep back upon me and engulf my mind!

How will these hours, when we twain are gray,
Turned in their sapphire tide, come flooding o'er us!

Ezra Pound

Hugh Selwyn Mauberly (Part I)

"Vocat aestus in umbram"
Nemesianus Es. IV.

E. P. Ode pour l'élection de son sépulchre

For three years, out of key with his time,
He strove to resuscitate the dead art
Of poetry; to maintain "the sublime"
In the old sense. Wrong from the start --

No, hardly, but, seeing he had been born
In a half savage country, out of date;
Bent resolutely on wringing lilies from the acorn;
Capaneus; trout for factitious bait:

"Idmen gar toi panth, os eni Troie
Caught in the unstopped ear;
Giving the rocks small lee-way
The chopped seas held him, therefore, that year.

His true Penelope was Flaubert,
He fished by obstinate isles;
Observed the elegance of Circe's hair
Rather than the mottoes on sun-dials.

Unaffected by "the march of events",
He passed from men's memory in l'an trentiesme
De son eage; the case presents
No adjunct to the Muses' diadem.

II.

The age demanded an image
Of its accelerated grimace,
Something for the modern stage,
Not, at any rate, an Attic grace;

Not, not certainly, the obscure reveries
Of the inward gaze;

Better mendacities
Than the classics in paraphrase!

The "age demanded" chiefly a mould in plaster,
Made with no loss of time,
A prose kinema, not, not assuredly, alabaster
Or the "sculpture" of rhyme.

III.

The tea-rose, tea-gown, etc.
Supplants the mousseline of Cos,
The pianola "replaces"
Sappho's barbitos.

Christ follows Dionysus,
Phallic and ambrosial
Made way for macerations;
Caliban casts out Ariel.

All things are a flowing,
Sage Heracleitus says;
But a tawdry cheapness
Shall reign throughout our days.

Even the Christian beauty
Defects -- after Samothrace;
We see to kalon
Decreed in the market place.

Faun's flesh is not to us,
Nor the saint's vision.
We have the press for wafer;
Franchise for circumcision.

All men, in law, are equals.
Free of Peisistratus,
We choose a knave or an eunuch
To rule over us.

A bright Apollo,

tin andra, tin eroa, tina theon,
What god, man, or hero
Shall I place a tin wreath upon?

IV.

These fought, in any case,
and some believing, pro domo, in any case ..

Some quick to arm,
some for adventure,
some from fear of weakness,
some from fear of censure,
some for love of slaughter, in imagination,
learning later ...

some in fear, learning love of slaughter;
Died some pro patria, non dulce non et decor" ..

walked eye-deep in hell
believing in old men's lies, then unbelieving
came home, home to a lie,
home to many deceits,
home to old lies and new infamy;

usury age-old and age-thick
and liars in public places.

Daring as never before, wastage as never before.
Young blood and high blood,
Fair cheeks, and fine bodies;

fortitude as never before

frankness as never before,
disillusions as never told in the old days,
hysterias, trench confessions,
laughter out of dead bellies.

V.

There died a myriad,
And of the best, among them,
For an old bitch gone in the teeth,
For a botched civilization.

Charm, smiling at the good mouth,
Quick eyes gone under earth's lid,

For two gross of broken statues,
For a few thousand battered books.

Yeux Glauques

Gladstone was still respected,
When John Ruskin produced
"Kings Treasuries"; Swinburne
And Rossetti still abused.

Fœtid Buchanan lifted up his voice
When that faun's head of hers
Became a pastime for
Painters and adulterers.

The Burne-Jones cartons
Have preserved her eyes;
Still, at the Tate, they teach
Cophetua to rhapsodize;

Thin like brook-water,
With a vacant gaze.
The English Rubaiyat was still-born
In those days.

The thin, clear gaze, the same
Still darts out faun-like from the half-ruin'd face,
Questing and passive ....
"Ah, poor Jenny's case" ...

Bewildered that a world
Shows no surprise
At her last maquero's
Adulteries.

"Siena Mi Fe', Disfecemi Maremma"

Among the pickled fœtuses and bottled bones,
Engaged in perfecting the catalogue,
I found the last scion of the
Senatorial families of Strasbourg, Monsieur Verog.

For two hours he talked of Gallifet;
Of Dowson; of the Rhymers' Club;
Told me how Johnson (Lionel) died
By falling from a high stool in a pub ...

But showed no trace of alcohol
At the autopsy, privately performed --
Tissue preserved -- the pure mind
Arose toward Newman as the whiskey warmed.

Dowson found harlots cheaper than hotels;
Headlam for uplift; Image impartially imbued
With raptures for Bacchus, Terpsichore and the Church.
So spoke the author of "The Dorian Mood",

M. Verog, out of step with the decade,
Detached from his contemporaries,
Neglected by the young,
Because of these reveries.

Brennbaum.

The sky-like limpid eyes,
The circular infant's face,
The stiffness from spats to collar
Never relaxing into grace;

The heavy memories of Horeb, Sinai and the forty years,
Showed only when the daylight fell
Level across the face
Of Brennbaum "The Impeccable".

Mr. Nixon

In the cream gilded cabin of his steam yacht
Mr. Nixon advised me kindly, to advance with fewer
Dangers of delay. "Consider
Carefully the reviewer.

"I was as poor as you are;
"When I began I got, of course,
"Advance on royalties, fifty at first", said Mr. Nixon,
"Follow me, and take a column,
"Even if you have to work free.

"Butter reviewers. From fifty to three hundred
"I rose in eighteen months;
"The hardest nut I had to crack
"Was Dr. Dundas.

"I never mentioned a man but with the view
"Of selling my own works.
"The tip's a good one, as for literature
"It gives no man a sinecure."

And no one knows, at sight a masterpiece.
And give up verse, my boy,
There's nothing in it."

* * *

Likewise a friend of Bloughram's once advised me:
Don't kick against the pricks,
Accept opinion. The "Nineties" tried your game
And died, there's nothing in it.

X.

Beneath the sagging roof
The stylist has taken shelter,
Unpaid, uncelebrated,
At last from the world's welter

Nature receives him,
With a placid and uneducated mistress
He exercises his talents

And the soil meets his distress.

The haven from sophistications and contentions
Leaks through its thatch;
He offers succulent cooking;
The door has a creaking latch.

XI.

"Conservatrix of Milésien"
Habits of mind and feeling,
Possibly. But in Ealing
With the most bank-clerkly of Englishmen?

No, "Milésian" is an exaggeration.
No instinct has survived in her
Older than those her grandmother
Told her would fit her station.

XII.

"Daphne with her thighs in bark
Stretches toward me her leafy hands", --
Subjectively. In the stuffed-satin drawing-room
I await The Lady Valentine's commands,

Knowing my coat has never been
Of precisely the fashion
To stimulate, in her,
A durable passion;

Doubtful, somewhat, of the value
Of well-gowned approbation
Of literary effort,
But never of The Lady Valentine's vocation:

Poetry, her border of ideas,
The edge, uncertain, but a means of blending
With other strata
Where the lower and higher have ending;

A hook to catch the Lady Jane's attention,

A modulation toward the theatre,
Also, in the case of revolution,
A possible friend and comforter.

* * *

Conduct, on the other hand, the soul
"Which the highest cultures have nourished"
To Fleet St. where
Dr. Johnson flourished;

Beside this thoroughfare
The sale of half-hose has
Long since superseded the cultivation
Of Pierian roses.

Ezra Pound

Image From D'Orleans

Young men riding in the street
In the bright new season
Spur without reason
Causing their steeds to leap.

And at the pace they keep
Their horses' armoured feet
Strike sparks from the cobbled street
In the bright new season.

Ezra Pound

Impressions Of Francois-Marie Arouet (De Voltaire)

I
Phyllidula and the Spoils of Gouvernet

Where, Lady, are the days
When you could go out in a hired hansom
Without footmen and equipments?
And dine in a soggy, cheap restaurant?
Phyllidula now, with your powdered Swiss footman
Clanking the door shut,
and lying;
And carpets from Savonnier, and from Persia,
And your new service at dinner,
And plates from Germain,
And cabinets and chests from Martin (almost lacquer),
And your white vases from Japan,
And the lustre of diamonds,
Etcetera, etcetera, and etcetera?

II
To Madame du Châtelet

If you'd have me go on loving you
Give me back the time of the thing.

Will you give me dawn light at evening?
Time has driven me out from the fine plaisaunces,

The parks with the swards all over dew,
And grass going glassy with the light on it,
The green stretches where love is and the grapes
Hang in yellow-white and dark clusters ready for pressing.
And if now we can't fit with our time of life
There is not much but its evil left us.

Life gives us two minutes, two seasons
One to be dull in;
Two deaths and to stop loving and being lovable,
That is the real death,
The other is little beside it.

Crying after the follies gone by me,
Quiet talking is all that is left us
Gentle talking, not like the first talking, less lively;
And to follow after friendship, as they call it,
Weeping that we can follow naught else.

III
To Madame Lullin

You'll wonder that an old man of eighty
Can go on writing you verses. . . .

Grass showing under the snow,
Birds singing late in the year!

And Tibullus could say of his death, in his Latin:
'Delia, I would look on you, dying.'

And Delia herself fading out,
Forgetting even her beauty.

Ezra Pound

In A Station Of The Metro

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
petals on a wet, black bough.

Ezra Pound

In Durance

(1907)
1 am homesick after mine own kind,
Oh I know that there are folk about me, friendly faces,
But I am homesick after mine own kind.

'These sell our pictures'! Oh well,
They reach me not, touch me some edge or that,
But reach me not and all my life's become
One flame, that reaches not beyond
My heart's own hearth,
Or hides among the ashes there for thee.
Thee'? Oh, 'Thee' is who cometh first
Out of mine own soul-kin,
For I am homesick after mine own kind
And ordinary people touch me not.
And I am homesick
After mine own kind that know, and feel
And have some breath for beauty and the arts.

Aye, I am wistful for my kin of the spirit
And have none about me save in the shadows
When come they, surging of power, 'DAEMON,'
'Quasi KALOUN.' S.T. says Beauty is most that, a
'calling to the soul'.
Well then, so call they, the swirlers out of the mist of my soul,
They that come mewards, bearing old magic.

But for all that, I am homesick after mine own kind
And would meet kindred even as I am,
Flesh-shrouded bearing the secret.
'All they that with strange sadness'
Have the earth in mockery, and are kind to all,
My fellows, aye I know the glory
Of th' unbounded ones, but ye, that hide
As I hide most the while
And burst forth to the windows only whiles or whiles
For love, or hope or beauty or for power,
Then smoulder, with the lids half closed
And are untouched by echoes of the world.

Oh ye, my fellows: with the seas between us some be,
Purple and sapphire for the silver shafts
Of sun and spray all shattered at the bows;
And some the hills hold off,
The little hills to east of us, though here we
Have damp and plain to be our shutting in.

And yet my soul sings 'Up!' and we are one.
Yea thou, and Thou, and THOU, and all my kin
To whom my breast and arms are ever warm,
For that I love ye as the wind the trees
That holds their blossoms and their leaves in cure
And calls the utmost singing from the boughs
That Hhout him, save the aspen, were as dumb
Still shade, and bade no whisper speak the birds of how
'Beyond, beyond, beyond, there lies . . .'

Ezra Pound

In Exitum Cuiusdam

On a certain one's departure

‘Time's bitter flood'! Oh, that's all very well,
But where's the old friend hasn't fallen off,
Or slacked his hand-grip when you first gripped fame?
I know your circle and can fairly tell
What you have kept and what you’ve left behind:
I know my circle and know very well
How many faces I'd have out of mind.

Ezra Pound

In Tempore Senectutis

When I am old
I will not have you look apart
From me, into the cold,
Friend of my heart,
Nor be sad in your remembrance
Of the careless, mad-heart semblance
That the wind hath blown away
When I am old.

When I am old
And the white hot wonder-fire
Unto the world seem cold,
My soul's desire
Know you then that all life's shower,
The rain of the years, that hour
Shall make blow for us one flower,
Including all, when we are old.

When I am old
If you remember
Any love save what is then
Hearth light unto life's December
Be your joy of past sweet chalices
To know then naught but this
"How many wonders are less sweet
Than love I bear to thee
When I am old."

Ezra Pound

In The Old Age Of The Soul

I do not choose to dream; there cometh on me
Some strange old lust for deeds.
As to the nerveless hand of some old warrior
The sword-hilt or the war-worn wonted helmet
Brings momentary life and long-fled cunning,
So to my soul grown old -
Grown old with many a jousting, many a foray,
Grown old with namy a hither-coming and hence-going -
Till now they send him dreams and no more deed;
So doth he flame again with might for action,
Forgetful of the council of elders,
Forgetful that who rules doth no more battle,
Forgetful that such might no more cleaves to him
So doth he flame again toward valiant doing.

Ezra Pound

Invern

Earth's winter cometh
And I being part of all
And sith the spirit of all moveth in me
I must needs bear earth's winter
Drawn cold and grey with hours
And joying in a momentary sun,
Lo I am withered with waiting till my spring cometh!
Or crouch covetous of warmth
O'er scant-logged ingle blaze,
Must take cramped joy in tomed Longinus
That, read I him first time
The woods agleam with summer
Or mid desirous winds of spring,
Had set me singing spheres
Or made heart to wander forth among warm roses
Or curl in grass next neath a kindly moon.

Ezra Pound

Ione, Dead The Long Year

Empty are the ways,
Empty are the ways of this land
And the flowers
Bend over with heavy heads.
They bend in vain.
Empty are the ways of this land
Where Ione
Walked once, and now does not walk
But seems like a person just gone.

Ezra Pound

Ité

Go, my songs, seek your praise from the young
and from the intolerant,
Move among the lovers of perfection alone.
Seek ever to stand in the hard Sophoclean light
And take you wounds from it gladly.

Ezra Pound

La Fraisne

For I was a gaunt, grave councillor
Being in all things wise, and very old,
But I have put aside this folly and the cold
That old age weareth for a cloak.

I was quite strong-at least they said so-
The young men at the sword-play;
But I have put aside this folly, being gay
In another fashion that more suiteth me.

I have curled 'mid the boles of the ash wood,
I have hidden my face where the oak
Spread his leaves over me, and the yoke
Of the old ways of men have I cast aside.

By the still pool of Mar-nan-otha
Have I found me a bride
That was a dog-wood tree some syne.
She hath called me from mine old ways
She hath hushed my rancour of council,
Bidding me praise

Naught but the wind that flutters in the leaves.

She hath drawn me from mine old ways,
Till men say that I am mad;
But I have seen the sorrow of men, and am glad,
For I know that the wailing and bitterness are a folly.

And I? I have put aside all folly and all grief.
I wrapped my tears in an ellum leaf
And left them under a stone
And now men call me mad because I have thrown
All folly from me, putting it aside
To leave the old barren ways of men,
Because my bride
Is a pool of the wood, and
Though all men say that I am mad
It is only that I am glad,

Very glad, for my bride hath toward me a great love
That is sweeter than the love of women
That plague and burn and drive one away.

Aie-e! 'Tis true that I am gay
Quite gay, for I have her alone here
And no man troubleth us.

Once when I was among the young men . . .
And they said I was quite strong, among the young men.
Once there was a woman . . .
. . . but I forget . . . she was . .
... I hope she will not come again.

... I do not remember…..

I think she hurt me once, but . . .
That was very long ago.

I do not like to remember things any more.

I like one little band of winds that blow
In the ash trees here:
For we are quite alone
Here 'mid the ash trees.

Ezra Pound

La Regina Avrillouse

Lady of rich allure,
Queen of the spring's embrace,
Your arms are long like boughs of ash,
Mid laugh-broken streams, spirit of rain unsure,
Breath of the poppy flower,
All the wood thy bower
And the hills thy dwelling-place.

This will I no more dream;
Warm is thy arm's allure,
Warm is the gust of breath
That ere thy lips meet mine
Kisseth my cheek and saith:
"This is the joy of earth,
Here is the wine of mirth
Drain ye one goblet sure,

Take ye the honey cup
The honied song raise up,
Drink of the spring's allure,
April and dew and rain;
Brown of the earth sing sure,
Cheeks and lips and hair
And soft breath that kisseth where
Thy lips have come not yet to drink."

Moss and the mold of earth,
These be thy couch of mirth,
Long arms thy boughs of shade
April-alluring, as the blade
Of grass doth catch the dew
And make it crown to hold the sun.
Banner be you
Above my head,
Glory to all wold display'd,
April-alluring, glory-bold.

Ezra Pound

Ladies

Agathas
Four and forty lovers had Agathas in the old days,
All of whom she refused;
And now she turns to me seeking love,
And her hair also is turning.

Young Lady
I have fed your lar with poppies,
I have adored you for three full years;
And now you grumble because your dress does not fit
And because I happen to say so.

Lesbia Illa
Memnon, Menmon, that lady
Who used to walk about amongst us
With such gracious uncertainty,
Is now wedded
To a British householder.
Lugete, Veneres! Lugete, Cupidinesque !

Passing
Flawless as Aphrodite,
Thoroughly beautiful,
Brainless,
The faint odour of your patchouli,
Faint, almost, as the lines of cruelty about your chin,
Assails me, and concerns me almost as little.

Ezra Pound

Lament Of The Frontier Guard

By the North Gate, the wind blows full of sand,
Lonely from the beginning of time until now!
Trees fall, the grass goes yellow with autumn.
I climb the towers and towers
to watch out the barbarous land:
Desolate castle, the sky, the wide desert.
There is no wall left to this village.
Bones white with a thousand frosts,
High heaps, covered with trees and grass;
Who brought this to pass?
Who has brought the flaming imperial anger?
Who has brought the army with drums and with kettle-drums?
Barbarous kings.
A gracious spring, turned to blood-ravenous autumn,
A turmoil of wars - men, spread over the middle kingdom,
Three hundred and sixty thousand,
And sorrow, sorrow like rain.
Sorrow to go, and sorrow, sorrow returning,
Desolate, desolate fields,
And no children of warfare upon them,
No longer the men for offence and defence.
Ah, how shall you know the dreary sorrow at the North Gate,
With Rihoku's name forgotten,
And we guardsmen fed to the tigers.

By Rihaku. [Li Po?]

Ezra Pound

Langue D'Oc

Alba

When the nightingale to his mate
Sings day-long and night late
My love and I keep state
In bower,
In flower,
''Till the watchman on the tower
Cry:
'Up! Thou rascal, Rise,
I see the white
Light
And the night
Flies:

I
Compleynt of a gentleman who has been waiting outside for some time

O plasmatour and true celestial light,
Lord powerful, engirdled all with might,
Give my good-fellow aid in fools' despite
Who stirs not forth this night,
And day comes on.
'Sst! my good fellow, art awake or sleeping?
Sleep thou no more. I see the star upleaping
That hath the dawn in keeping,
And day comes on!
'Hi! Harry, hear me, for I sing aright
Sleep not thou now, I hear the bird in flight
That plaineth of the going of the night,
And day comes on!
‘Come now! Old swenkin! Rise up from thy bed,
I see the signs upon the welkin spread,
If thou come not, the cost be on thy head.
And day comes on!
‘And here I am since going down of sun,
And pray to God that is St. Mary's son,
To bring thee safe back, my companion.
And day comes on.

'And thou out here beneath the porch of stone
Badest me to see that a good watch was done,
And now thou'lt none of me, and wilt have none
Of song of mine.
(Bass voice from inside)
'Wait, my good fellow. For such joy I take
With her venust and noblest to my make
To hold embraced, and will not her forsake
For yammer of the cuckold,
Though day break.'
(Girart Bornello)

II
Avril

When the springtime is sweet
And the birds repeat
Their new song in the leaves.
'Tis meet
A man go where he will.

But from where my heart is set
No message I get;
My heart all wakes and grieves;
Defeat
Or luck, I must have my fill.

Our love comes out
Like the branch that turns about
On the top of the hawthorne,
With frost and hail at night
Suffers despite
'Till the sun come, and the green leaf on the bough.

I remember the young day
When we set strife away,
And she gave me such gesning,
Her love and her ring:
God grant I die not by any man's stroke
'Till I have my hand 'neath her cloak.

I care not for their clamour

Who have come between me and my charmer,
For I know how words run loose,
Big talk and little use.
Spoilers of pleasure,
We take their measure.
(Guilhem de Peitieu)

III
Descant on a Theme by Cerclamon

When the sweet air goes bitter,
And the cold birds twitter
Where the leaf falls from the twig,
I sough and sing

that Love goes out
Leaving me no power to hold him.

Of love I have naught
Save trouble and sad thought,
And nothing is grievous
as I desirous,
Wanting only what
No man can get or has got.

With the noblest that stands in men's sight,
If all the world be in despite
I care not a glove.
Where my love is, there is a glitter of sun;
God give me life, and let my course run

'Till I have her I love
To lie with and prove.

I do not live, nor cure me,
Nor feel my ache great as it is,
For love will give
me no respite,
Nor do I know when I turn left or right
nor when I go out.

For in her is all my delight

And all that can save me.

I shake and burn and quiver
From love, awake and in swevyn,
Such fear I have she deliver
me not from pain,
Who know not how to ask her;
Who can not.
Two years, three years I seek
And though I fear to speak out,
Still she must know it.

If she won't have me now, Death is my portion,
Would I had died that day
I came into her sway.
God! How softly this kills!
When her love look steals on me.
Killed me she has, I know not how it was,
For I would not look on a woman.

Joy I have none, if she make me not mad
Or set me quiet, or bid me chatter.
Good is it to me if she flout
Or turn me inside out, and about.
My ill doth she turn sweet.

How swift it is.
For I am traist and loose,
I am true, or a liar,
All vile, or all gentle,
Or shaking between,
as she desire,
I, Cerclamon, sorry and glad,
The man whom love had
and has ever;
Alas! who'er it please or pain,
She can me retain.
I am gone from one joy,
From one I loved never so much,
She by one touch
Reft me away;
So doth bewilder me

I can not say my say
nor my desire,
And when she looks on me
It seems to me
I lose all wit and sense.

The noblest girls men love
'Gainst her I prize not as a glove
Worn and old.
Though the whole world run rack
And go dark with cloud,
Light is
Where she stands,
And a clamour loud
in my ears.

IV
Vergier

In orchard under the hawthorne
She has her lover till morn,
Till the traist man cry out to warn
Them God how swift the night,
And day comes on.

O Plasmatour, that thou end not the night,
Nor take my beloved from my sight,
Nor I, nor tower-man, look on daylight,
'Fore God, How swift the night,
And day comes on.

'Lovely thou art, to hold me close and kisst,
Now cry the birds out, in the meadow mist,
Despite the cuckold, do thou as thou list,
So swiftly goes the night
And day comes on.

‘My pretty boy, make we our play again
Here in the orchard where the birds complain,
'Till the traist watcher his song unrein,
Ah God! How swift the night
And day comes on.'

'Out of the wind that blows from her,
That dancing and gentle is and thereby pleasanter,
Have I drunk a draught, sweeter than scent of myrrh.
Ah God! How swift the night.
And day comes on.'

Venust the lady, and none lovelier,
For her great beauty, many men look on her,
Out ofmy love will her heart not stir.
By God, how swift the night.
And day comes on.

Ezra Pound

L'Art

Green arsenic smeared on an egg-white cloth,
Crushed strawberries! Come, let us feast our eyes.

Ezra Pound

Leave-Taking Near Shoku

They say the roads of Sanso are steep,
Sheer as the mountains.
The walls rise in a man's face,
Clouds grow out of the hill
at his horse's bridle.
Sweet trees are on the paved way of the Shin,
Their trunks burst through the paving,
And freshets are bursting their ice
in the midst of Shoku, a proud city.
Men's fates are already set,
There is no need of asking diviners.

Ezra Pound

Les Millwin

The little Millwins attend the Russian Ballet.
The mauve and greenish souls of the little Millwins
Were seen lying along the upper seats
Like so many unused boas.

The turbulent and undisciplined host of art students-
The rigorous deputation from 'Slade'-
Was before them.

With arms exalted, with fore-arms
Crossed in great futuristic X's, the art students
Exulted, they beheld the splendours of Cleopatra

And the little Millwins beheld these things;
With their large and anaemic eyes they looked out upon
this configuration.

Let us therefore mention the fact,
For it seems to us worthy of record.

Ezra Pound

L'Homme Moyen Sensuel

‘Tis of my country that I would endite,
In hope to set some misconceptions right.
My country? I love it well, and those good fellows
Who, since their wit's unknown, escape the gallows.
But you stuffed coats who're neither tepid nor distinctly boreal,
Pimping, conceited, placid, editorial,
Could I but speak as 'twere in the 'Restoration'
I would articulate your perdamnation.
This year perforce I must with circumspection
For Mencken states somewhere, in this connection:
‘It is a moral nation we infest.'
Despite such reins and checks I'll do my best,
An art! You all respect the arts, from that infant tick
Who's now the editor of The Altantic,
From Comstock's self, down to the meanest resident,
Till up again, right up, we reach the president,
Who shows his taste in his ambassadors:
A novelist, a publisher, to pay old scores,
A novelist, a publisher and a preacher,
That's sent to Holland, a most particular feature,
Henry Van Dyke, who thinks to charm the Muse you pack her in
A sort of stinking deliquescent saccharine.
The constitution of our land, O Socrates,
Was made to incubate such mediocrities,
These and a state in books that's grown perennial
And antedates the Philadelphia centennial.
Still I'd respect you more if you could bury
Mabie, and Lyman Abbot and George Woodberry,
For minds so wholly founded upon quotations
Are not the best of pulse for infant nations.
Dulness herself, that abject spirit, chortles
To see your forty self-baptized immortals,
And holds her sides where swelling laughter cracks 'em
Before the 6Ars Poetica' of Hiram Maxim.
All one can say of this refining medium
Is cZut! Cinque lettres!' a banished gallic idiom,
Their doddering ignorance is waxed so notable
'Tis time that it was capped with something quotable.

Here Radway grew, the fruit of pantosocracy,
The very fairest flower of their gynocracy.
Radway ? My hero, for it will be more inspiring
If I set forth a bawdy plot like Byron
Than if I treat the nation as a whole.
Radway grew up. These forces shaped his soul;
These, and yet God, and Dr. Parkhurst's god, the N.Y. Journal
(Which pays him more per week than The Supernal).
These and another godlet of that day, your day
(You feed a hen on grease, perhaps she'll lay
The sterile egg that is still eatable:
'Prolific Noyes' with output undefeatable).
From these he (Radway) learnt, from provosts and from editors unyielding
And innocent of Stendhal, Flaubert, Maupassant and Fielding.
They set their mind (it's still in that condition)
May we repeat; the Centennial Exposition
At Philadelphia, 1876?
What it knew then, it knows, and there it sticks.
And yet another, a 'charming man', ‵sweet nature,' but was Gilder,
De mortuis verum, truly the master builder?

From these he learnt. Poe, Whitman, Whistler, men, their recognition
Was got abroad, what better luck do you wish 'em,
When writing well has not yet been forgiven
In Boston, to Henry James, the greatest whom we've seen living.
And timorous love of the innocuous
Brought from Gt. Britain and dumped down a'top of us,
Till you may take your choice: to feel the edge of satire or
Read Bennett or some other flaccid flatterer.
Despite it all, despite your Red Bloods, febrile concupiscence
Whose blubbering yowls you take for passion's essence;
Despite it all, your compound predilection
For ignorance, its growth and its protection
(Vide the tariff), I will hang simple facts
Upon a tale, to combat other tracts,
'Message to Garcia,' Mosher's propagandas
That are the nation's botts, collicks and glanders.
Or from the feats of Sumner cull it? Think,
Could Freud or Jung'unfathom such a sink?

My hero, Radway, I have named, in truth,
Some forces among those which 'formed' his youth:

These heavy weights, these dodgers and these preachers,
Crusaders, lecturers and secret lechers,
Who wrought about his 'soul' their stale infection.
These are the high-brows, and to this collection
The social itch, the almost, all but, not quite, fascinating,
Piquante, delicious, luscious, captivating:
Puffed satin, and silk stockings, where the knee
Clings to the skirt in strict (vide: 'Vogue') propriety.
Three thousand chorus girls and all unkissed,
state sans song, sans home-grown wine, sans realist!
'Tell me not in mournful wish-wash
Life's a sort of sugared dish-wash!'
Radway had read the various evening papers
And yearned to imitate the Waldorf capers
As held before him in that unsullied mirror
The daily press, and monthlies nine cents dearer.
They held the very marrow of the ideals
That fed his spirit; were his mental meals.
Also, he'd read of Christian virtues in
That canting rag called Everybody's Magazine,
And heard a clergy that tries on more wheezes
Than e'er were heard of by Our Lord Ch . . . . J
So he 'faced life' with rather mixed intentions,
He had attended country Christian Endeavour Conventions,
Where one gets more chances
Than Spanish ladies had in old romances.
(Let him rebuke who ne'er has known the pure Platonic grapple,
Or hugged two girls at once behind a chapel.)
Such practices diluted rural boredom
Though some approved of them, and some deplored 'em.
Such was he when he got his mother's letter
And would not think a thing that could upset her. . . .
Yet saw an ad.' To-night, THE HUDSON SAIL,
With forty queens, and music to regale
The select company: beauties you all would know
By name, if named.' So it was phrased, or rather somewhat so
I have mislaid the ‛ad.', but note the touch,
Note, reader, note the sentimental touch:
His mother's birthday gift. (How pitiful
That only sentimental stuff will sell!)

Yet Radway went. A circumspectious prig!

And then that woman like a guinea-pig
Accosted, that's the word, accosted him,
Thereon the amorous calor slightly frosted him.
(I burn, I freeze, I sweat, said the fair Greek,
I speak in contradictions, so to speak.)

I've told his training, he was never bashful,
And his pockets by ma's aid, that night with cash full,
The invitation had no need of fine aesthetic,
Nor did disgust prove such a strong emetic
That we, with Masefield's vein, in the next sentence
Record ‘Odd's blood! Ouch! Ouch!' a prayer, his swift repentance.
No, no, they danced. The music grew much louder
As he inhaled the 'still fumes of rice-powder.
Then there came other nights, came slow but certain
And were such nights that we should 'draw the curtain'
In writing fiction on uncertain chances
Of publication; 'Circumstances,'
As the editor of The Century says in print,
'Compel a certain silence and restraint.'
Still we will bring our 'fiction as near to fact' as
The Sunday school brings virtues into practice.

Soon our hero could manage once a week,
Not that his pay had risen, and no leak
Was found in his employer's cash. He learned the lay of cheaper places,
And then Radway began to go the paces:
A rosy path, a sort of vernal ingress,
And Truth should here be careful of her thin dress
Though males of seventy, who fear truths naked harm us,
Must think Truth looks as they do in wool pyjamas.
(My country, I've said your morals and your thoughts are stale ones,
But surely the worst of your old-women are the male ones.)

Why paint these days? An insurance inspector
For fires and odd risks, could in this sector
Furnish more data for a compilation
Than I can from this distant land and station,
Unless perhaps I should have recourse to
One of those firm-faced inspecting women, who
Find pretty Irish girls in Chinese laundries,
Up stairs, the third floor up, and have such quandaries

As to how and why and whereby they got in
And for what earthly reason they remain. . . .
Alas, eheu, one question that sorely vexes
The serious social folk is 'just what sex is'.
Though it will, of course, pass off with social science
In which their mentors place such wide reliance . .
De Gourmont says that fifty grunts are all that will be prized.
Of langauge, by men wholly socialized,
With signs as many, that shall represent 'em
When thoroughly socialized printers want to print 'em.
'As free of mobs as kings'? I'd have men free of that invidious,
Lurking, serpentine, amphibious and insidious
Power that compels 'em
To be so much alike that every dog that smells 'em,
Thinks one identity is
Smeared o'er the lot in equal quantities.
Still we look toward the day when man, with unction,
Will long only to be a social function,
And even Zeus' wild lightning fear to strike
Lest it should fail to treat all men alike.
And I can hear an old man saying: 'Oh, the rub!'
I see them sitting in the Harvard Club,
'And rate 'em up at just so much per head,
'Till I have viewed straw hats and their habitual clothing
'All the same style, same cut, with perfect loathing.'

So Radway walked, quite like the other men,
Out into the crepuscular half-light, now and then;
Saw what the city offered, cast an eye
Upon Manhattan's gorgeous panoply,
The flood of limbs upon Eighth Avenue
To beat Prague, Budapesth, Vienna or Moscow,
Such animal invigorating carriage
As nothing can restrain or much disparage. . . .
Still he was not given up to brute enjoyment,
An anxious sentiment was his employment,
For memory of the first warm night still cast a haze o'er
The mind of Radway, whene'er he found a pair of purple stays or
Some other quaint reminder of the occasion
That first made him believe in immoral suasion.
A temperate man, a thin potationist, each day
A silent hunter off the Great White Way,

He read The Century and thought it nice
To be not too well known in haunts of vice
The prominent haunts, where one might recognize him,
And in his daily walks duly capsize him.
Thus he eschewed the bright red-walled cafes and
Was never one of whom one speaks as ‵brazen'd'.

Some men will live as prudes in their own village
And make the tour abroad for their wild tillage
I knew a tourist agent, one whose art is
To run such tours. He calls 'em. . . . house parties.
But Radway was a patriot whose venality
Was purer in its love of one locality,
A home-industrious worker to perfection,
A sensational jobber for protection,
Especially on books, lest knowledge break in
Upon the national brains and set 'em achin'.
'Tis an anomaly in our large land of freedom,
You can not get cheap books, even if you need 'em.)
Radway was ignorant as an editor,
And, heavenly, holy gods! I can't say more,
Though I know one, a very base detractor,
Who has the phrase ‵As ignorant as an actor,'
But turn to Radway: the first night on the river,
Running so close to ‵hell′ it sends a shiver
Down Rodyheaver's prophylactic spine,
Let me return to this bold theme of mine,
Of Radway. O clap hand ye moralists!
And meditate upon the Lord's conquests.
When last I met him, he was a pillar in
An organization for the suppression of sin. . . .
Not that he'd changed his tastes, nor yet his habits,
(Such changes don't occur in men, or rabbits).
Not that he was a saint, nor was top-loftical
In spiritual aspirations, but he found it profitable,
For as Ben Franklin said, with such urbanity:
'Nothing will pay thee, friend, like Christianity.'
And in our day thus saith the Evangelist:
'Tent preachin' is the kind that pays the best.'

'Twas as a business asset pure an′ simple
That Radway joined the Baptist Broadway Temple.

I find no moral for a peroration,
He is the prototype of half the nation.

Ezra Pound

Liu Ch'E

The rustling of the silk is discontinued,
Dust drifts over the court-yard,
There is no sound of foot-fall, and the leaves
Scurry into heaps and lie still,
And she the rejoicer of the heart is beneath them:

A wet leaf that clings to the threshold.

Ezra Pound

M. Pom-Pom

M. Pom-POM allait en guerre
Per vendere cannoni
Mon beau grand frère
Ne peut plus voir
Per vendere cannoni.

M. Pom-POM est au sénat
Per vendere cannoni
Pour vendre des canons
Pour vendre des canons
To sell the god damn'd frogs
A few more canon,

Ezra Pound

Marvoil

A poor clerk I, 'Arnaut the less' they call me,
And because I have small mind to sit
Day long, long day cooped on a stool
A-jumbling o' figures for Maitre Jacques Polin,
I ha' taken to rambling the South here.

The Vicomte of Beziers's not such a bad lot.
I made rimes to his lady this three year:
Vers and canzone, till that damn'd son of Aragon,
Alfonso the half-bald, took to hanging
His helmet at Beziers.
Then came what might come, to wit: three men and one woman,
Beziers off at Mont-Ausier, I and his lady
Singing the stars in the turrets of Beziers,
And one lean Aragonese cursing the seneschal
To the end that you see, friends:

Aragon cursing in Aragon, Beziers busy at Beziers
Bored to an inch of extinction,
Tibors all tongue and temper at Mont-Ausier,
Me! in this damn'd inn of Avignon,
Stringing long verse for the Burlatz;
All for one half-bald, knock-knee'd king of the Aragonese,
Alfonso, Quattro, poke-nose.

And if when I am dead
They take the trouble to tear out this wall here,
They'11 know more of Arnaut of Marvoil
Than half his canzoni say of him.
As for will and testament I leave none,
Save this: ‘Vers and canzone to the Countess of Beziers
In return for the first kiss she gave me.'
May her eyes and her cheek be fair
To all men except the King of Aragon,
And may I come'speedily to Beziers
Whither my desire and my dream have preceded me.

O hole in the wall here! be thou my jongleur
As ne'er had I other, and when the wind blows,

Sing thou the grace of the Lady of Beziers,
For even as thou art hollow before I fill thee with this parchment,
So is my heart hollow when she filleth not mine eyes,
And so were my mind hollow, did she not fill utterly my thought.

Wherefore, O hole in the wall here,
When the wind blows sigh thou for my sorrow
That I have not the Countess of Beziers
Close in my arms here.
Even as thou shalt soon have this parchment.

O hole in the wall here, be thou my jongleur,
And though thou sighest my sorrow in the wind,
Keep yet my secret in thy breast here;
Even as I keep her image in my heart here.

Ezra Pound

Masks

These tales of old disguisings, are they not
Strange myths of souls that found themselves among
Unwonted folk that spake an hostile tongue,
Some soul from all the rest who'd not forgot
The star-span acres of a former lot
Where boundless mid the clouds his course he swung,
Or carnate with his elder brothers sung
Ere ballad-makers lisped of Camelot?

Old singers half-forgetful of their tunes,
Old painters color-blind come back once more,
Old poets skill-less in the wind-heart runes,
Old wizards lacking in their wonder-lore:

All they that with strange sadness in their eyes
Ponder in silence o'er earth's queynt devyse?

Ezra Pound

Mauberley

I
Turned from the 'eau-forte
Par Jaquemart'
To the strait head
Of Messalina:

'His true Penelope
Was Flaubert,'
And his tool
The engraver's.

Firmness,
Not the full smile,
His art, but an art
In profile;

Colourless
Pier Francesca,
Pisanello lacking the skill
To forge Achaia.

II
For three years, diabolus in the scale,
He drank ambrosia,
All passes, ANANGKE prevails,
Came end, at last, to that Arcadia.

He had moved amid her phantasmagoria,
Amid her galaxies,
NUKTIS 'AGALMA

Drifted . . . drifted precipitate,
Asking time to be rid of ...
Of his bewilderment; to designate
His new found orchid. . . .

To be certain . . . certain . . .
(Amid aerial flowers) . . . time for arrangements-
Drifted on

To the final estrangement;

Unable in the supervening blankness
To sift TO AGATHON from the chaff
Until he found his sieve . . .
Ultimately, his seismograph:

Given that is his 'fundamental passion',
This urge to convey the relation
Of eye-lid and cheek-bone
By verbal manifestations;
To present the series
Of curious heads in medallion

He had passed, inconscient, full gaze,
The wide-branded irides
And botticellian sprays implied
In their diastasis;

Which ansethesis, noted a year late,
And weighed, revealed his great affect,
(Orchid), mandate
Of Eros, a retrospect.

Mouths biting empty air,
The still stone dogs,
Caught in metamorphosis, were
Left him as epilogues.

Ezra Pound

Medallion

Luini in porcelain!
The grand piano
Utters a profane
Protest with her clear soprano.

The sleek head emerges
From the gold-yellow frock
As Anadyomene in the opening
Pages of Reinach.

Honey-red, closing the face-oval,
A basket-work of braids which seem as if they were
Spun in King Minos' hall
From metal, or intractable amber;

The face-oval beneath the glaze,
Bright in its suave bounding-line, as,
Beneath half-watt rays,
The eyes turn topaz.

Ezra Pound

Meditatio

When I carefully consider the curious habits of dogs
I am compelled to conclude
That man is the superior animal.

When I consider the curious habits of man
I confess, my friend, I am puzzled.

Ezra Pound

Mesmerism

Aye you're a man that ! ye old mesmerizer
Tyin' your meanin' in seventy swadelin's,
One must of needs be a hang'd early riser
To catch you at worm turning. Holy Odd's body-kins!

'Cat's i' the water butt!' Thought's in your verse-barrel,
Tell us this thing rather, then we'll believe you,
You, Master Bob Browning, spite your apparel
Jump to your sense and give praise as we'd lief do.

You wheeze as a head-cold long-tonsilled Calliope,
But God! what a sight you ha' got o' our in'ards,
Mad as a hatter but surely no Myope,
Broad as all ocean and leanin' man-kin'ards.

Heart that was big as the bowels of Vesuvius,
Words that were wing'd as her sparks in eruption,
Eagled and thundered as Jupiter Pluvius,
Sound in your wind past all signs o' corruption.

Here's to you, Old Hippety-Hop o' the accents,
True to the Truth's sake and crafty dissector,
You grabbed at the gold sure; had no need to pack cents,
Into your versicles.
Clear sight's elector!

Ezra Pound

Middle-Aged

'Tis but a vague, invarious delight
As gold that rains about some buried king.

As the fine flakes,
When tourists frolicking
Stamp on his roof or in the glazing light
Try photographs, wolf down their ale and cakes
And start to inspect some further pyramid;

As the fine dust, in the hid cell
Beneath their transitory step and merriment,
Drifts through the air, and the sarcophagus
Gains yet another crust
Of useless riches for the occupant,
So I, the fires that lit once dreams
Now over and spent,
Lie dead within four walls
And so now love
Rains down and so enriches some stiff case,
And strews a mind with precious metaphors,

And so the space
Of my still consciousness
Is full of gilded snow,

The which, no cat has eyes enough
To see the brightness of.

Ezra Pound

Moeurs Contemporaines

I

Mr. Styrax 1
Mr. Hecatomb Styrax, the owner of a large estate and of large muscles,
A 'blue' and a climber of mountains, has married at the age of 28,
He being at that age a virgin,
The term Virgo' being made male in mediaeval latinity;
His ineptitudes
Have driven his wife from one religious excess to another.
She has abandoned the vicar
For he was lacking in vehemence;
She is now the high-priestess
Of a modern and ethical cult,
And even now Mr. Styrax
Does not believe in asthetics.

2
His brother has taken to gipsies,
But the son-in-law of Mr. H. Styrax
Objects to perfumed cigarettes.
In the parlance of Niccolo Machiavelli:
‘Thus things proceed in their circle';
And thus the empire is maintained.

II
Clara

At sixteen she was a potential celebrity
With a distaste for caresses.
She now writes to me from a convent;
Her life is obscure and troubled;
Her second husband will not divorce her;
Her mind is, as ever, uncultivated,
And no issue presents itself.
She does not desire her children,
Or any more children.
Her ambition is vague and indefinite,
She will neither stay in, nor come out.

III
Soirée

Upon learning that the mother wrote verses,
And that the father wrote verses,
And that the youngest son was in a publisher's office,
And that the friend of the second daughter was undergoing a novel,
The young American pilgrim
Exclaimed:
'This is a darn'd clever bunch!'

IV
Sketch 48 b. 11

At the age of 27
Its home mail is still opened by its maternal parent
And its office mail may be opened by
its parent of the opposite gender.
It is an officer,
and a gentleman,
and an architect.

V
'Nodier raconte . . .'

1
A.t a friend of my wife's there is a photograph,
A faded, pale brownish photograph,
Of the times when the sleeves were large,
Silk, stiff and large above the lacertus,
That is, the upper arm,
And décolleté'. . . .
It is a lady,
She sits at a harp,
Playing,

And by her left foot, in a basket,
Is an infant, aged about 14 months,
The infant beams at the parent,
The parent re-beams at its offspring.
The basket is lined with satin,
There is a satin-like bow on the harp.

2
And in the home of the novelist
There is a satin-like bow on an harp.
You enter and pass hall after hall,
Conservatory follows conservatory,
Lilies lift their white symbolical cups,
Whence their symbolical pollen has been excerpted,
Near them I noticed an harp
And the blue satin ribbon,
And the copy of 4Hatha Yoga'
And the neat piles of unopened, unopening books,

And she spoke to me of the monarch,
And of the purity of her soul.

VI
Stele

After years of continence
he hurled himself into a sea of six women.
Now, quenched as the brand of Meleagar,
he lies by the poluphloisboious sea-coast.

SISTE VIATOR

VII
I Vecchii

They will come no more,
The old men with beautiful manners.

II était comme un tout petit garçon
With his blouse full of apples
And sticking out all the way round;
Blagueur! 'Con gli occhi onesti e tardi,'

And he said:
‘0h! Abelard!' as if the topic
Were much too abstruse for his comprehension,
And he talked about 'the Great Mary',
And said: ‘Mr. Pound is shocked at my levity.'

When it turned out he meant Mrs. Ward.

And the other was rather like my bust by Gaudier,
Or like a real Texas colonel,
He said: 'Why flay dead horses?
'There was once a man called Voltaire.'

And he said they used to cheer Verdi,
In Rome, after the opera,
And the guards couldn't stop them,

And that was an anagram for Vittorio
Emanuele Re D' Italia,
And the guards couldn't stop them.

Old men with beautiful manners,
Sitting in the Row of a morning;
Walking on the Chelsea Embankment.

VIII
Ritratto

And she said:
' You remember Mr. Lowell,
'He was your ambassador here?'
And I said: 'That was before I arrived.'
And she said:
'He stomped into my bedroom....
(By that time she had got on to Browning.)
'. . . stomped into my bedroom. . . .
'And said: 'Do I,
' 'I ask you, Do I
' 'Care too much for society dinners?'
'And I wouldn't say that he didn't.
'Shelley used to live in this house.'

She was a very old lady,
I never saw her again.

Ezra Pound

Monumentum Aere, Etc.

You say that I take a good deal upon myself;
That I strut in the robes of assumption.

In a few years no one will remember the buffo,
No one will remember the trivial parts of me,
The comic detail will be absent.
As for you, you will rot in the earth,
And it is doubtful if even your manure will be rich
enough

To keep grass
Over your grave.

Ezra Pound

Mr. Housman's Message

O woe, woe,
People are born and die,
We also shall be dead pretty soon
Therefore let us act as if we were
dead already.

The bird sits on the hawthorn tree
But he dies also, presently.
Some lads get hung, and some get shot.
Woeful is this human lot.
Woe! woe, etcetera. . . .

London is a woeful place,
Shropshire is much pleasanter.
Then let us smile a little space
Upon fond nature's morbid grace.
Oh, Woe, woe, woe, etcetera. . . .

Ezra Pound

Mr. Nixon

In the cream gilded cabin of his steam yacht
Mr. Nixon advised me kindly, to advance with fewer
Dangers of delay. 'Consider
Carefully the reviewer.

'I was as poor as you are;
'When I began I got, of course,
'Advance on royalties, fifty at first,' said Mr. Nixon,
'Follow me, and take a column,
'Even if you have to work free.

'Butter reviewers. From fifty to three hundred
'I rose in eighteen months;
'The hardest nut I had to crack
'Was Dr. Dundas.

'I never mentioned a man but with the view
'Of selling my own works.
'The tip's a good one, as for literature
'It gives no man a sinecure.

'And no one knows, at sight, a masterpiece.
'And give up verse, my boy,
'There's nothing in it.'

Likewise a friend of Bloughram's once advised me:
Don't kick against the pricks,
Accept opinion. The 'Nineties' tried your game
And died, there's nothing in it.

X
Beneath the sagging roof
The stylist has taken shelter,
Unpaid, uncelebrated,
At last from the world's welter

Nature receives him;
With a placid and uneducated mistress
He exercises his talents

And the soil meets his distress.

The haven from sophistications and contentions
Leaks through its thatch;
He offers succulent cooking;
The door has a creaking latch.

XI
Conservatrix of Milésien'
Habits of mind and feeling,
Possibly. But in Ealing
With the most bank-clerkly of Englishmen ?

No, 'Milésian' is an exaggeration.
No instinct has survived in her
Older than those her grandmother
Told her would fit her station.

XII
'Daphne with her thighs in bark
Stretches toward me her leafy hands,'
Subjectively. In the stuffed-satin drawing-room
I await The Lady Valentine's commands,

Knowing my coat has never been
Of precisely the fashion
To stimulate, in her,
A durable passion;

Doubtful, somewhat, of the value
Of well-gowned approbation
Of literary effort,
But never of The Lady Valentine's vocation:

Poetry, her border of ideas,
The edge, uncertain, but a means of blending
With other strata
Where the lower and higher have ending;

A hook to catch the Lady Jane's attention,
A modulation toward the theatre,
Also, in the case of revolution,

A possible friend and comforter.

Conduct, on the other hand, the soul
‘Which the highest cultures have nourished'
To Fleet St. where
Dr. Johnson flourished;

Beside this thoroughfare
The sale of half-hose has
Long since superseded the cultivation
Of Pierian roses.

Ezra Pound

N. Y.

My City, my beloved, my white! Ah, slender,
Listen! Listen to me, and I will breathe into thee a soul.
Delicately upon the reed, attend me!

Now do I know that I am mad,
For here are a million people surly with traffic;
This is no maid.
Neither could I play upon any reed if I had one.

My City, my beloved,
Thou art a maid with no breasts,
Thou art slender as a silver reed.
Listen to me, attend me!
And I will breathe into thee a soul,
And thou shalt live for ever.

Ezra Pound

Na Audiart

Though thou well dost wish me ill
Audiart, Audiart,
Where thy bodice laces start
As ivy fingers clutching through
Its crevices,
Audiart, Audiart,
Stately, tall and lovely tender
Who shall render
Audiart, Audiart,
Praises meet unto thy fashion?
Here a word kiss !
Pass I on
Unto Lady ‘Miels-de-Ben’,
Having praised thy girdle's scope
How the stays ply back from it;
I breath no hope
That thou shouldst . . .
Nay no whit
Bespeak thyself for anything.
Just a word in thy praise, girl,
Just for the swirl
Thy satins make upon the stair,
'Cause never a flaw was there
Where thy torse and limbs are met
Though thou hate me, read it set
In rose and gold.
Or when the minstrel, tale half told,
Shall burst to lilting at the praise
'Audiart, Audiart' . .
Bertrans, master of his lays,
Bertrans of Aultaforte thy praise
Sets forth, and though thou hate me well,
Yea though thou wish me ill,
Audiart, Audiart.
Thy loveliness is here writ till,
Audiart,
Oh, till thou come again.
And being bent and wrinkled, in a form
That hath no perfect limning, when the warm

Youth dew is cold
Upon thy hands, and thy old soul
Scorning a new, wry'd casement,
Churlish at seemed misplacement,
Finds the earth as bitter
As now seems it sweet,
Being so young and fair
As then only in dreams,
Being then young and wry'd,
Broken of ancient pride,
Thou shalt then soften,
Knowing, I know not how,
Thou wert once she
Audiart, Audiart
For whose fairness one forgave
Audiart,
Audiart
Que be-m vols mal.

Ezra Pound

National Song (E.C.)

There is no land like England
Where banks rise day by day,
There are no banks like English banks
To make the people pay.

There is no such land of castles
Where an Englishman is free
To read his smutty literature
With muffins at his tea.

Chorus:
For the French have comic papers
Not that nice Britons read 'em,
But the bawdy little Britons
Have bank sharks to bleed 'em

And to keep an eye on their readin' matter
Lest they should overhear the distressing chatter
Of the new economical theories
And ask inconvenient queetfes.

Ezra Pound

Near Perigord

I
You'd have men's hearts up from the dust
And tell their secrets, Messire Cino,
Rigkt enough? Then read between the lines of Uc St. Circ,
Solve me the riddle, for you know the tale.

Bertrans, En Bertrans, left a fine canzone:
6Maent, I love you, you have turned me out.
The voice at Montfort, Lady Agnes' hair,
Bel Miral's stature, the viscountess' throat,
Set all together, are not worthy of you. . . .'
And all the while you sing out that canzone,
Think you that Maent lived at Montaignac,
One at Chalais, another at Malemort
Hard over Brive for every lady a castle,
Each place strong.

Oh, is it easy enough?
Tairiran held hall in Montaignac,
His brother-in-law was all there was of power
In Perigord, and this good union
Gobbled all the land, and held it later for some hundred years.
And our En Bertrans was in Altafort,
Hub of the wheel, the stirrer-up of strife,
As caught by Dante in the last wallow of hell
The headless trunk 'that made its head a lamp',
For separation wrought out separation,
And he who set the strife between brother and brother
And had his way with the old English king,,
Viced in such torture for the 'counterpass'.
How would you live, with neighbours set about you
Poictiers and Brive, untaken Rochecouart,
Spread like the finger-tips of one frail hand;
And you on that great mountain of a palm
Not a neat ledge, not Foix between its streams,
But one huge back half-covered up with pine,
Worked for and snatched from the string-purse of Born
The four round towers, four brothers mostly fools
What could he do but play the desperate chess,

And stir old grudges?
‘Pawn your castles, lords!
Let the Jews pay.'
And the great scene
(That, maybe, never happened!)
Beaten at last,
Before the hard old king:
'Your son, ah, since he died
''My wit and worth are cobwebs brushed aside
'In the full flare of grief. Do what you will.'

Take the whole man, and ravel out the story.
He loved this lady in castle Montaignac ?
The castle flanked him he had need of it.
You read to-day, how long the overlords of Perigord,
The Talleyrands, have held the place; it was no transient fiction.
And Maent failed him? Or saw through the scheme?

And all his net-like thought of new alliance?
Chalais is high, a-level with the poplars.
Its lowest stones just meet the valley tips
Where the low Dronne is filled with water-lilies.
And Rochecouart can match it, stronger yet,
The very spur's end, built on sheerest cliff,
And Malemort keeps its close hold on Brive,
While Born, his own close purse, his rabbit warren,
His subterranean chamber with a dozen doors,
A-bristle with antennae to feel roads,
To sniff the traffic into Perigord.
And that hard phalanx, that unbroken line,
The ten good miles from there to Maent's castle,
All of his flank how could he do without her?
And all the road to Cahors, to Toulouse?
would he do without her?

‘Papiol,
Go forthright singing Anhes, Cembelins.
There is a throat; ah, there are two white hands;
There is a trellis full of early roses,
And all my heart is bound about with love.
Where am I come with compound flatteries
What doors are open to fine compliment?'

And every one half jealous of Maent?
He wrote the catch to pit their jealousies
Against her; give her pride in them?

Take his own speech, make what you will of it
And still the knot, the first knot, of Maent?

Is it a love poem? Did he sing of war?
Is it an intrigue to run subtly out,
Born of a jongleur's tongue, freely to pass
Up and about and in and out the land,
Mark him a craftsman and a strategist?
(St. Leider had done as much as Polhonac,
Singing a different stave, as closely hidden.)
Oh, there is precedent, legal tradition,
To sing one thing when your song means another,
'Et albirar ab lor bordon '
Foix' count knew that. What is Sir Bertrans' singing?
Maent, Maent, and yet again Maent,
Or war and broken heaumes and politics?

II
End fact. Try fiction. Let us say we see
En Bertrans, a tower-room at Hautefort,
Sunset, the ribbon-like road lies, in red cross-light,
Southward toward Montaignac, and he bends at a table
Scribbling, swearing between his teeth; by his left hand
Lie little strips of parchment covered over,
Scratched and erased with al and ochaisos.
Testing his list of rhymes, a lean man? Bilious?
With a red straggling beard?
And the green cat's-eye lifts toward Montaignac.

Or take his 'magnet' singer setting out,
Dodging his way past Aubeterre, singing at Chalais
In the vaulted hall,
Or, by a lichened tree at Rochecouart
Aimlessly watching a hawk above the valleys,
Waiting his turn in the mid-summer evening,
Thinking of Aelis, whom he loved heart and soul . . .
To find her half alone, Montfort away,
And a brown, placid, hated woman visiting her,

Spoiling his visit, with a year before the next one.
Little enough ?
Or carry him forward. 'Go through all the courts,
My Magnet,' Bertrans had said.

We came to Ventadour
In the mid love court, he sings out the canzon,
No one hears save Arrimon Luc D'Esparo
No one hears aught save the gracious sound of compliments.
Sir Arrimon counts on his fingers, Montfort,
Rochecouart, Chalais, the rest, the tactic,
Malemort, guesses beneath, sends wrord to Cceur-de-Lion:
The compact, de Born smoked out, trees felled
About his castle, cattle driven out!
Or no one sees it, and En Bertrans prospered?

And ten years after, or twenty, as you will,
Arnaut and Richard lodge beneath Chalus:
The dull round towers encroaching on the field,
The tents tight drawn, horses at tether
Further and out of reach, the purple night,
The crackling of small fires, the bannerets,
The lazy leopards on the largest banner,
Stray gleams on hanging mail, an armourer's torch-flare
Melting on steel.

And in the quietest space
They probe old scandals, say de Born is dead;
And we've the gossip (skipped six hundred years).
Richard shall die to-morrow leave him there
Talking oftrobar clus with Daniel.
And the 'best craftsman' sings out his friend's song,
Envies its vigour . . . and deplores the technique,
Dispraises his own skill? That's as you will.
And they discuss the dead man,
Plantagenet puts the riddle: 'Did he love her?'
And Arnaut parries: 'Did he love your sister?
True, he has praised her, but in some opinion
He wrote that praise only to show he had
The favour of your party; had been well received.'

'You knew the man.'

‘You knew the man.'
'I am an artist, you have tried both metiers.'
'You were born near him.'
'Do we know our friends?'
'Say that he saw the castles, say that he loved Maent!'
'Say that he loved her, does it solve the riddle?'
End the discussion, Richard goes out next day
And gets a quarrel-bolt shot through his vizard,
Pardons the bowman, dies, ,

Ends our discussion. Arnaut ends
‘In sacred odour' (that's apocryphal!)
And we can leave the talk till Dante writes:
Surely I saw, and still before my eyes
Goes on that headless trunk, that bears for light
Its own head swinging, gripped by the dead hair,
And like a swinging lamp that says, 'Ah me!
I severed men, my head and heart
Ye see here severed, my life's counterpart.’
Or take En Bertrans?

III
Bewildering spring, and by the Auvezere
Poppies and day's eyes in the green 6mail
Rose over us; and we knew all that stream,
And our two horses had traced out the valleys;
Knew the low flooded lands squared out with poplars,
In the young days when the deep sky befriended.
And great wings beat above us in the twilight,
And the great wheels in heaven
Bore us together . . . surging . . . and apart . . .
Believing we should meet with lips and hands,

High, high and sure . . . and then the counter-thrust:
‘Why do you love me? Will you always love me?
But I am like the grass, I can not love you.'
Or, ‘Love, and I love and love you,
And hate your mind, not you, your soul, your hands.'

So to this last estrangement, Tairiran!

There shut; up in his castle, Tairiran's,

She who had nor ears nor tongue save in her hands,
Gone ah, gone untouched, unreachable !
She who could never live save through one person,
She who could never speak save to one person,
And all the rest of her a shifting change,
A broken bundle of mirrors . . . !

Ezra Pound

Nicotine

Hymn to the Dope

Goddess of the murmuring courts,
Nicotine, my Nicotine,
Houri of the mystic sports,
trailing-robed in gabardine,
Gliding where the breath hath glided,
Hidden sylph of filmy veils,
Truth behind the dream is veiléd
E'en as thou art, smiling ever, ever gliding,
Wraith of wraiths, dim lights dividing
Purple, grey, and shadow green
Goddess, Dream-grace, Nicotine.

Goddess of the shadow's lights,
Nicotine, my Nicotine,
Some would set old Earth to rights,
Thou I none such ween.
Veils of shade our dream dividing,
Houris dancing, intergliding,
Wraith of wraiths and dream of faces,
Silent guardian of the old unhallowed places,
Utter symbol of all old sweet druidings,
Mem'ry of witched wold and green,
Nicotine, my Nicotine:

Neath the shadows of thy weaving
Dreams that need no undeceiving,
Loves that longer hold me not,
Dreams I dream not any more,
Fragrance of old sweet forgotten places,
Smiles of dream-lit, flit-by faces
All as perfume Arab-sweet
Deck the high road to thy feet

As were Godiva's coming fated
And all the April's blush belated
Were lain before her, carpeting

The stones of Coventry with spring,
So thou my mist-enwreathéd queen,
Nicotine, white Nicotine,
Riding engloried in they hair
Mak'st by-road of our dreams
Thy thorough-fare.

Ezra Pound

Night Litany

O Dieu, purifiez nos cceurs!
Purifiez nos coeurs !

Yea the lines hast thou laid unto me
in pleasant places,
And the beauty of this thy Venice
hast thou shown unto me
Until is its loveliness become unto me
a thing of tears.

O God, what great kindness
have we done in times past
and forgotten it,
That thou givest this wonder unto us,
O God of waters?

O God of the night,
What great sorrow
Cometh unto us,
That thou thus repayest us
Before the time of its coming?

O God of silence,
Purifiez nos cœurs,
Purifiez nos cœurs,
For we have seen
The glory of the shadow of the
likeness of thine handmaid,

Yea, the glory of the shadow
of thy Beauty hath walked
Upon the shadow of the waters
In this thy Venice.
And before the holiness
Of the shadow of thy handmaid
Have I hidden mine eyes,
O God of waters.

O God of silence,

Purifiez nos cœurs,
Purifiez nos cœurs,
O God of waters,
make clean our hearts within us,
For I have seen the
Shadow of this thy Venice
Floating upon the waters,
And thy stars

Have seen this thing, out of their far courses
Have they seen this thing,
O God of waters,
Even as are thy stars
Silent unto us in their far-coursing,
Even so is mine heart
become silent within me.

Purifiez nos cœurs,
O God of the silence,
Purifiez nos cœurs,
O God of waters.

Ezra Pound

Notes For Canto Cxx

I have tried to write Paradise

Do not move
Let the wind speak
that is paradise.

Let the Gods forgive what I
have made
Let those I love try to forgive
what I have made.

Ezra Pound

Of Jacopo Del Sellaio

This man knew out the secret ways of love,
No man could paint such things who did not know.
And now she's gone, who was his Cyprian,
And you are here, who are ‘The Isles’ to me.

And here's the thing that lasts the whole thing out:
The eyes of this dead lady speak to me.

Ezra Pound

Old Idea Of Choan By Rosoriu

I
The narrow streets cut into the wide highway at Choan,
Dark oxen, white horses,
drag on the seven coaches with outriders.
The coaches are perfumed wood,
The jewelled chair is held up at the crossway,
Before the royal lodge:
A glitter of golden saddles, awaiting the princess;
They eddy before the gate of the barons.
The canopy embroidered with dragons
drinks in and casts back the sun.
Evening comes.
The trappings are bordered with mist.
The hundred cords of mist are spread through
and double the trees,
Night birds, and night women,
Spread out their sounds through the gardens.

II
Birds with flowery wing, hovering butterflies
crowd over the thousand gates,
Trees that glitter like jade,
terraces tinged with silver,
The seed of a myriad hues,
A net-work of arbours and passages and covered ways,
Double towers, winged roofs,
border the net-work of ways:
A place of felicitous meeting.
Riu's house stands out on the sky,
with glitter of colour
As Butei of Kan had made the high golden lotus
to gather his dews,
Before it another house which I do not know:
How shall we know all the friends
whom we meet on strange roadways?

Ezra Pound

Ole Kate

When I was only a youngster,
Sing: toodle doodlede ootl
Ole Kate would git her 'arf a pint
And wouldn't' giv' a damn hoot.

'Them stairs! them stairs, them gordam stairs
Will be the death of me/
I never heerd her say nothin'
About the priv'lege of liberty.

She'd come a sweatin' up with the coals
An a-sloshin' round with 'er mop,
Startin' in about 6 a.m.
And didn't seem never to stop.

She died on the job they tells me,
Fell plump into her pail.
Never got properly tanked as I saw,
And never got took to jail,

Just went on a sloshin'
And totin' up scuttles of coal,
And kissin9 her cat fer diversion,
Cod rest her sloshin' soul.

'Gimme a kissy-cuddle'
She'd say to her tibby-cat,
But she never made no mention
Of this here proletariat.

Ezra Pound

On His Own Face In A Glass

O strange face there in the glass!
O ribald company, O saintly host,
O sorrow-swept my fool,
What answer? O ye myriad
That strive? and play and pass,
Jest, challenge, counterlie!
I? I? I?
And ye?

Ezra Pound

Ortus

How have I laboured?
How have I not laboured
To bring her soul to birth,
To give these elements a name and a centre!
She is beautiful as the sunlight, and as fluid.
She has no name, and no place.
How have I laboured to bring her soul into separation;
To give her a name and her being!

Surely you are bound and entwined,
You are mingled with the elements unborn;
I have loved a stream and a shadow.
I beseech you enter your life.
I beseech you learn to say 'I'
When I question you;
For you are no part, but a whole,
No portion, but a being.

Ezra Pound

Our Contemporaries

When the Taihaitian princess
Heard that he had decided,
She rushed out into the sunlight and swarmed up a
cocoanut palm tree,

But he returned to this island
And wrote ninety Petrarchan sonnets.

Ezra Pound

Pagani's, November 8

Suddenly discovering in the eyes of the very beautiful
Normande cocotte
The eyes of the very learned British Museum assistant.

Ezra Pound

Pan Is Dead

‘Pan is dead. Great Pan is dead.
Ah! bow your heads, ye maidens all,
And weave ye him his coronal.’

'There is no summer in the leaves,
And withered are the sedges;
How shall we weave a coronal,
Or gather floral pledges?'

'That I may not say, Ladies.
Death was ever a churl.
That I may not say, Ladies.
How should he show a reason,
That he has taken our Lord away
Upon such hollow season?'

Ezra Pound

Paracelsus In Excelsis

‘Being no longer human, why should I
Pretend humanity or don the frail attire?
Men have I known and men, but never one
Was grown so free an essence, or become
So simply element as what I am.
The mist goes from the mirror and I see.
Behold! the world of forms is swept beneath-
Turmoil grown visible beneath our peace,
And we that are grown formless, rise above-
Fluids intangible that have been men,
We seem as statues round whose high-risen base
Some overflowing river is run mad,
In us alone the element of calm.'

Ezra Pound

Phanopoeia

I
ROSE WHITE, YELLOW, SILVER

The swirl of light follows me through the square,
The smoke of incense
Mounts from the four horns of my bed-posts,
The water-jet of gold light bears us up through the ceilings;
Lapped in the gold-coloured flame I descend through the æther.
The silver ball forms in my hand,
It falls and rolls to your feet.

II
SALTUS
The swirling sphere has opened
and you are caught up to the skies,
You are englobed in my sapphire.
Io! Io!

You have perceived the blades of the flame
The flutter of sharp-edged sandals.

The folding and lapping brightness
Has held in the air before you.
You have perceived the leaves of the flame.

III
CONCAVA VALLIS
The wire-like bands of colour involute mount from my fingers;
I have wrapped the wind round your shoulders
And the molten metal of your shoulders
bends into the turn of the wind,

AOI!
The whirling tissue of light
is woven and grows solid beneath us;
The sea-clear sapphire of air, the sea-dark clarity,
stretches both sea-cliff and ocean.

Phyllidula

Phyllidula is scrawny but amorous,
Thus have the gods awarded her,
That in pleasure she receives more than she can give;
If she does not count this blessed
Let her change her religion.

Ezra Pound

Piccadilly

Beautiful, tragical faces—
Ye that were whole, and are so sunken;
And, O ye vile, ye that might have been loved,
That are so sodden and drunken,
Who hath forgotten you?

O wistful, fragile faces, few out of many!

The crass, the coarse, the brazen,
God knows I cannot pity them, perhaps, as I should do;
But oh, ye delicate, wistful faces,
Who hath forgotten you?

Ezra Pound

Piere Vidal Old

When I but think upon the great dead days
And turn my mind upon that splendid madness,
Lo! I do curse my strength
And blame the sun his gladness;
For that the one is dead
And the red sun mocks my sadness.

Behold me, Vidal, that was fool of fools!
Swift as the king wolf was I and as strong
When tall stags fled me through the alder brakes,
And every jongleur knew me in his song,
And the hounds fled and the deer fled
And none fled over long.

Even the grey pack knew me and knew fear.
God! how the swiftest hind's blood spurted hot
Over the sharpened teeth and purpling lips!
Hot was that hind's blood yet it scorched me not
As did first scorn, then lips of the Penautier!
Aye ye are fools, if ye think time can blot

From Piere Vidal’s remembrance that blue night.
God! but the purple of the sky was deep!
Clear, deep, translucent, so the stars me seemed
Set deep in crystal; and because my sleep
Rare visitor came not, the Saints I guerdon
For that restlessness Piere set to keep

One more fool's vigil with the hollyhocks.
Swift came the Loba, as a branch that's caught,
Torn, green and silent in the swollen Rhone,
Green was her mantle, close, and wrought
Of some thin silk stuff that's scarce stuff at all,
But like a mist wherethrough her white form fought,

And conquered! Ah God! conquered!
Silent my mate came as the night was still.
Speech? Words? Faugh! Who talks of words and love?!
Hot is such love and silent,

Silent as fate is, and as strong until
It faints in taking and in giving all.

Stark, keen, triumphant, till it plays at death.
God! she was white then, splendid as some tomb
High wrought of marble, and the panting breath
Ceased utterly. Well, then I waited, drew,
Half-sheathed, then naked from its saffron sheath
Drew full this dagger that doth tremble here.

Just then she woke and mocked the less keen blade.
Ah God, the Loba! and my only mate!
Was there such flesh made ever and unmade!
God curse the years that turn such women grey!
Behold here Vidal, that was hunted, flayed,
Shamed and yet bowed not and that won at last.

And yet I curse the sun for his red gladness,
I that have known strath, garth, brake, dale,
And every run-away of the wood through that great
madness,
Behold me shrivelled as an old oak's trunk
And made men's mock'ry in my rotten sadness!

No man hath heard the glory of my days:
No man hath dared and won his dare as I:
One night, one body and one welding flame!
What do ye own, ye niggards! that can buy
Such glory of the earth? Or who will win
Such battle-guerdon with his 'prowesse high' ?

O age gone lax! O stunted followers,
That mask at passions and desire desires,
Behold me shrivelled, and your mock of mocks;
And yet I mock you by the mighty fires
That burnt me to this ash.

Ah! Cabaret! Ah Cabaret, thy hills again!

Take your hands off me! . . . [Sniffing the air.
Ha! this scent is hot!

Planh For The Young English King

If all the grief and woe and bitterness,
All dolour, ill and every evil chance
That ever came upon this grieving world
Were set together they would seem but light
Against the death of the young English King.
Worth lieth riven and Youth dolorous,
The world overshadowed, soiled and overcast,
Void of all joy and full of ire and sadness.

Grieving and sad and full of bitterness
Are left in teen the liegemen courteous,
The joglars supple and the troubadours.
O'er much hath ta'en Sir Death that deadly warrior
In taking from them the young English King,
Who made the freest hand seem covetous.
'Las! Never was nor will be in this world
The balance for this loss in ire and sadness!

O skilful Death and full of bitterness,
Well mayst thou boast that thou the best chevalier
That any folk e'er had, hast from us taken;
Sith nothing is that unto worth pertaineth
But had its life in the young English King
And better were it, should God grant his pleasure,
That he should live than many a living dastard
That doth but wound the good with ire and sadness.

From this faint world, how full of bitterness
Love takes his way and holds his joy deceitful
Sith no thing is but turneth unto anguish
And each to-day Vails less than yestere'en,
Let each man visage this young English King
That was most valiant 'mid all worthiest men!
Gone is his body fine and amorous,
Whence have we grief, discord and deepest sadness.

Him, whom it pleased for our great bitterness
To come to earth to draw us from misventure,
Who drank of death for our salvacioun,

Him do we pray as to a Lord most righteous
And humble eke, that the young English King
He please to pardon, as true pardon is,
And bid go in with honoured companions
There where there is no grief, nor shall be sadness.

Ezra Pound

Poem

(Abbreviated from the conversation with Mr. T E H.

Over the flat slope of St Eloi
A wide wall of sandbags.
Night,
In the silence desultory men
Pottering over small fires, cleaning their mess-tins:
To and fro, from the lines,
Men walk as on Piccadilly,
Making paths in the dark,
Through scattered dead horses,
Over a dead Belgian’s body.

The Germans have rockets. The English have no rockets,
Behind the lines, cannon, hidden, lying back miles.
Before the line, chaos.

My mind is a corridor. The minds about me are
corridors.
Nothing suggests itself. There is nothing to do but keep on.

Ezra Pound

Poem By The Bridge At Ten-Shin

March has come to the bridge head,
Peach boughs and apricot boughs hang over a thousand
gates,
At morning there are flowers to cut the heart,
And evening drives them on the eastward-flowing
waters.
Petals are on the gone waters and on the going,
And on the back-swirling eddies,
But to-day's men are not the men of the old days,
Though they hang in the same way over the bridge-rail.

The sea's colour moves at the dawn
And the princes still stand in rows, about the throne,
And the moon falls over the portals of Sei-go-yo,
And clings to the walls and the gate-top.
With head gear glittering against the cloud and sun,
The lords go forth from the court, and into far borders.
They ride upon dragon-like horses,
Upon horses with head-trappings of yellow metal,
And the streets make way for their passage.
Haughty their passing,
Haughty their steps as they go in to great banquets,
To high halls and curious food,
To the perfumed air and girls dancing,
To clear flutes and clear singing;
To the dance of the seventy couples;
To the mad chase through the gardens.
Night and day are given over to pleasure
And they think it will last a thousand autumns,
Unwearying autumns.
For them the yellow dogs howl portents in vain,
And what are they compared to the lady Riokushu,
That was cause of hate!
Who among them is a man like Han-rei
Who departed alone with his mistress,
With her hair unbound, and he his own skiffsman!

Ezra Pound

Poetic Eggs

I am a grave poetic hen
That lays poetic eggs
And to enhance my temperament
A little quiet begs.

We make the yolk philosophy,
True beauty the albumen.
And then gum on a shell of form
To make the screed sound human.

Ezra Pound

Portrait D'Une Femme

Your mind and you are our Sargasso Sea,
London has swept about you this score years
And bright ships left you this or that in fee:
Ideas, old gossip, oddments of all things,
Strange spars of knowledge and dimmed wares of price.
Great minds have sought you -- lacking someone else.
You have been second always. Tragical?
No. You preferred it to the usual thing:
One dull man, dulling and uxorious,
One average mind -- with one thought less, each year.
Oh, you are patient, I have seen you sit
Hours, where something might have floated up.
And now you pay one. Yes, you richly pay.
You are a person of some interest, one comes to you
And takes strange gain away:
Trophies fished up; some curious suggestion;
Fact that leads nowhere; and a tale for two,
Pregnant with mandrakes, or with something else
That might prove useful and yet never proves,
That never fits a corner or shows use,
Or finds its hour upon the loom of days:
The tarnished, gaudy, wonderful old work;
Idols and ambergris and rare inlays,
These are your riches, your great store; and yet
For all this sea-hoard of deciduous things,
Strange woods half sodden, and new brighter stuff:
In the slow float of differing light and deep,
No! there is nothing! In the whole and all,
Nothing that's quite your own.
Yet this is you.

Ezra Pound

Post Mortem Conspectu

A brown, fat babe sitting in the lotus,
And you were glad and laughing
With a laughter not of this world.
It is good to splash in the water
And laughter is the end of all things.

Ezra Pound

Praise Of Ysolt

In vain have I striven,
to teach my heart to bow;
In vain have I said to him
'There be many singers greater than thou'.

But his answer cometh, as winds and as lutany,
As a vague crying upon the night
That leaveth me no rest, saying ever,
'Song, a song.'
Their echoes play upon each other in the twilight
Seeking ever a song.
Lo, I am worn with travail
And the wandering of many roads hath made my eyes
As dark red circles filled with dust.
Yet there is a trembling upon me in the twilight,
And little red elf words crying, ‘A song',
Little grey elf words crying for a song,
Little brown leaf words crying, ‘A song',
Little green leaf words crying for a song.
The words are as leaves, old brown leaves in the spring time
Blowing they know not whither, seeking a song.

White words as snow flakes but they are cold,
Moss words, lip words, words of slow streams.

In vain have I striven
to teach my soul to bow,
In vain have I pled with him:
'There be greater souls than thou.'

For in the morn of my years there came a woman
As moonlight calling,
As the moon calleth the tides,
'Song, a song.'

Wherefore I made her a song and she went from me
As the moon doth from the sea,
But still came the leaf words, little brown elf words
Stying 'The soul sendeth us'.

'A song, a song!'
And in vain I cried unto them ‘I have no song
For she I sang of hath gone from me'.

But my soul sent a woman, a woman of the wonder-folk,
A woman as fire upon the pine woods
crying 'Song, a song'.
As the flame crieth unto the sap.
My song was ablaze with her and she went from me
As flame leaveth the embers so went she unto new forests '
And the words were with me
crying ever. 'Song, a song'.

And I 'I have no song',
Till my soul sent a woman as the sun:
Yea as the sun calleth to the seed,
As the spring upon the bough
So is she that cometh, the mother of songs,
She that holdeth the wonder words within her eyes
The words, little elf words
that call ever unto me,
'Song, a song'.

In vain have I striven with my soul
to teach my soul to bow.
What soul boweth
while in his heart art thou?

Ezra Pound

Prayer For His Lady’s Life

FROM PROPERTIUS, ELEGIAE, LIB. III, 26
Here let thy clemency, Persephone, hold firm,
Do thou, Pluto, bring here no greater harshness.
So many thousand beauties are gone down to Avernus,
Ye might let one remain above with us.

With you is lope, with you the white-gleaming Tyro,
With you is Europa and the shameless Pasiphae,
And all the fair from Troy and all from Achaia,
From the sundered realms, of Thebes and of aged Priamus;
And all the maidens of Rome, as many as they were,
They died and the greed of your flame consumes them.

Here let thy clemency, Persephone, hold firm.
Do thou, Pluto, bring here no greater harshness.
So many thousandfair are gone down to Avernus,
Ye might let one remain above with us.

Ezra Pound

Provincia Deserta

At Rochecoart,
Where the hills part
in three ways,
And three valleys, full of winding roads,
Fork out to south and north,
There is a place of trees . . . gray with lichen.
I have walked there
thinking of old days.
At Chalais
is a pleached arbour;
Old pensioners and old protected \vomen
Have the right there
it is charity.
I have crept over old rafters,
peering down
Over the Dronne,
over a stream full of lilies.
Eastward the road lies,
Aubeterre is eastward,
With a garrulous old man at the inn.
I know the roads in that place:
Mareuil to the north-east,
La Tour,
There are three keeps near Mareuil,
And an old woman,
glad to hear Arnaut,
Glad to lend one dry clothing.

I have walked
into Perigord,
I have seen the torch-flames, high-leaping,
Painting the front of that church;
Heard, under the dark, whirling laughter.
I have looked back over the stream
and seen the high building,
Seen the long minarets, the white shafts.
I have gone in Ribeyrac
and in Sarlat,
I have climbed rickety stairs, heard talk of Croy,

Walked over En Bertran's old layout,
Have seen Narbonne, and Cahors and Chalus,
Have seen Excideuil, carefully fashioned.

I have said:
'Here such a one walked.
'Here Cceur-de-Lion was slain.
'Here was good singing.
'Here one man hastened his step.
'Here one lay panting.'
I have looked south from Hautefort,
thinking of Montaignac, southward.
I have lain in Rocafixada,
level with sunset,
Have seen the copper come down
tingeing the mountains,
I have seen the fields, pale, clear as an emerald,
Sharp peaks, high spurs, distant castles.
I have said: The old roads have lain here.
'Men have gone by such valleys
'Where the great halls were closer together.'
I have seen Foix on its rock, seen Toulouse, and
Aries greatly altered,
I have seen the ruined 'Dorata'.
I have said:
'Riquier! Guido.'
I have thought of the second Troy,
Some little prized place in Auvergnat:
Two men tossing a coin, one keeping a castle,
One set on the highway to sing.
He sang a woman,
Auvergne rose to the song;
The Dauphin backed him.
'The castle to Austors!'
'Pieire kept the singing
'A fair man and a pleasant.'
He won the lady,
Stole her away for himself, kept her against armed force:
So ends that story.
That age is gone;
Pieire de Maensac is gone.
I have walked over these roads;

I have thought of them living.

Ezra Pound

Quies

This is another of our ancient loves.
Pass and be silent, Rullus, for the day
Hath lacked a something since this lady passed;
Hath lacked a something. 'Twas but marginal.

Ezra Pound

Rome

O thou newcomer who seek'st Rome in Rome
And find'st in Rome no thing thou canst call Roman;
Arches worn old and palaces made common
Rome's name alone within these walls keeps home.

Behold how pride and ruin can befall
One who hath set the whole world 'neath her laws,
All-conquering, now conquered, because
She is Time's prey, and Time conquereth all.

Rome that art Rome's one sole last monument,
Rome that alone hast conquered Rome the town,
Tiber alone, transient and seaward bent,

Remains of Rome. O world, thou unconstant mime!
That which stands firm in thee Time batters down,
And that which fleeteth doth outrun swift Time.

Ezra Pound

Safe And Sound

My name is Nunty Cormorant
And my finance is sound,
I lend you Englishmen hot air
At one and three the pound.

I lend you Englishmen hot air
And I get all the beef
While you stalwart sheep of freedom
Are on the poor relief.

Wot oh! my buxom hearties,
What ain't got work no more
And don't know what bug is a-bitin'
To keep your feelin's sore,

There is blokes in automobiles
And their necks sunk into fur
That keep on gettin' usury
To make 'em cosier.

I read these fellers puts it
Most tidily away
And then lends out their printed slips
To keep the wolf away

From the vaults and combination
Safes in Thread and Needle street.
I wouldn't 'ave the needle
If I had more grub to eat.

Oh the needle is your portion,
My sufferin' fellow men,
Till the King shall take the notion
To own his coin again.

Ezra Pound

Salutation

O generation of the thoroughly smug
      and thoroughly uncomfortable,
I have seen fishermen picnicking in the sun,
I have seen them with untidy families,
I have seen their smiles full of teeth
      and heard ungainly laughter.
And I am happier than you are,
And they were happier than I am;
And the fish swim in the lake
      and do not even own clothing.

Ezra Pound

Salutation The Second

You were praised, my books,
because I had just come from the country;
I was twenty years behind the times
so you found an audience ready.
I do not disown you,
do not you disown your progeny.

Here they stand without quaint devices,
Here they are with nothing archaic about them.
Observe the irritation in general:

‘Is this’ they say, 'the nonsense
that we expect of poets?’
'Where is the Picturesque ?'
‘Where is the vertigo of emotion?'
‘No! his first work was the best.’
'Poor Dear! he has lost his illusions.’

Go, little naked and impudent songs,
Go with a light foot!
(Or with two light feet, if it please you!)
Go and dance shamelessly!
Go with an impertinent frolic!

Greet the grave and the stodgy,
Salute them with your thumbs at your noses.

Here are your bells and confetti.
Go! rejuvenate things!
Rejuvenate even 'The Spectator.’
Go! and make cat calls!
Dance and make people blush,
Dance the dance of the phallus
and tell anecdotes of Cybele!
Speak of the indecorous conduct of the Gods!
(Tell it to Mr. Strachey)

Ruffle the skirts of prudes,
speak of their knees and ankles.

But, above all, go to practical people
go! jangle their door-bells!
Say that you do no work
and that you will live forever.

Ezra Pound

Salutation The Third

Let us deride the smugness of 'The Times': GUFFAW!
So much for the gagged reviewers,
It will pay them when the worms are wriggling in their
vitals;
These are they who objected to newness,
Here are their tomb-stones.
They supported the gag and the ring:
A little BLACK Box contains them.
So shall you be also,
You slut-bellied obstructionist,
You sworn foe to free speech and good letters,
You fungus, you continuous gangrene.

Come, let us on with the new deal,
Let us be done with pandars and jobbery,
Let us spit upon those who pat the big-bellies for profit,
Let us go out in the air a bit.

Or perhaps I will die at thirty?
Perhaps you will have the pleasure of defiling my
pauper's grave;
I wish you joy, I proffer you all my assistance.
It has been your habit for long
to do away with good writers,
You either drive them mad, or else you blink at their
suicides,
Or else you condone their drugs,
and talk of insanity and genius,
But I will not go mad to please you,
I will not flatter you with an early death,
Oh, no, I will stick it out,
Feel your hates wriggling about my feet
As a pleasant tickle,
to be observed with derision,
Though many move with suspicion,
Afraid to say that they hate you;
The taste of my boot ?
Here is the taste of my boot,
Caress it,

lick off the blacking.

Ezra Pound

Salvationists

I
Come, my songs, let us speak of perfection
We shall get ourselves rather disliked.

II
Ah yes, my songs, let us resurrect
The very excellent term Rusticus.
Let us apply it in all its opprobrium
To those to whom it applies.
And you may decline to make them immortal,
For we shall consider them and their state
In delicate
Opulent silence.

III
Come, my songs,
Let us take arms against this sea of stupidities-
Beginning with Mumpodorus;
And against this sea of vulgarities
Beginning with Nimmim;
And against this sea of imbeciles
All the Bulmenian literati.

Ezra Pound

Satiemus

What if I know thy speeches word by word?
And if thou knew'st I knew them wouldst thou speak?
What if I know thy speeches word by word,
And all the time thou sayest them o'er I said,
'Lo, one there was who bent her fair bright head,
Sighing as thou dost through the golden speech.'
Or, as our laughters mingle each with each,
As crushed lips take their respite fitfully,
What if my thoughts were turned in their mid reach
Whispering among them, 'The fair dead
Must know such moments, thinking on the grass;
On how white dogwoods murmured overhead
In the bright glad days!'
How if the low dear sound within thy throat
Hath as faint lute-strings in its dim accord
Dim tales that blind me, running one by one
With times told over as we tell by rote;
What if I know thy laughter word by word
Nor find aught novel in thy merriment ?

Ezra Pound

Sennin Poem By Kakuhaku

The red and green kingfishers
flash between the orchids and clover,
One bird casts its gleam on another.
Green vines hang through the high forest,
They weave a whole roof to the mountain,
The lone man sits with shut speech,
He purrs and pats the clear strings.
He throws his heart up through the sky,
He bites through the flower pistil
and brings up a fine fountain.
The red-pine-tree god looks at him and wonders.
He rides through the purple smoke to visit the sennin,
He takes 'Floating Hill' by the sleeve,
He claps his hand on the back of the great water sennin.

But you, you dam'd crowd of gnats,
Can you even tell the age of a turtle?

Ezra Pound

Separation On The River Kiang

Ko-Jin goes west from Ko-kaku-ro,
The smoke-flowers are blurred over the river.
His lone sail blots the far sky.
And now I see only the river,
The long Kiang, reaching heaven.

Ezra Pound

Sestina: Altaforte

Loquitur: En Bertrans de Born.
Dante Alighieri put this man in hell for that he was a
stirrer-up of strife.
Eccovi!
Judge ye!
Have I dug him up again?
The scene in at his castle, Altaforte. "Papiols" is his jongleur.
"The Leopard," the device of Richard (Cúur de Lion).

I

Damn it all! all this our South stinks peace.
You whoreson dog, Papiols, come! Let's to music!
I have no life save when the swords clash.
But ah! when I see the standards gold, vair, purple, opposing
And the broad fields beneath them turn crimson,
Then howl I my heart nigh mad with rejoicing.

II

In hot summer have I great rejoicing
When the tempests kill the earth's foul peace,
And the lightnings from black heav'n flash crimson,
And the fierce thunders roar me their music
And the winds shriek through the clouds mad, opposing,
And through all the riven skies God's swords clash.

III

Hell grant soon we hear again the swords clash!
And the shrill neighs of destriers in battle rejoicing,
Spiked breast to spiked breast opposing!
Better one hour's stour than a year's peace
With fat boards, bawds, wine and frail music!
Bah! there's no wine like the blood's crimson!

IV

And I love to see the sun rise blood-crimson.

And I watch his spears through the dark clash
And it fills all my heart with rejoicing
And pries wide my mouth with fast music
When I see him so scorn and defy peace,
His lone might 'gainst all darkness opposing.

V

The man who fears war and squats opposing
My words for stour, hath no blood of crimson
But is fit only to rot in womanish peace
Far from where worth's won and the swords clash
For the death of such sluts I go rejoicing;
Yea, I fill all the air with my music.

VI

Papiols, Papiols, to the music!
There's no sound like to swords swords opposing,
No cry like the battle's rejoicing
When our elbows and swords drip the crimson
And our charges 'gainst "The Leopard's" rush clash.
May God damn for ever all who cry "Peace!"

VII

And let the music of the swords make them crimson!
Hell grant soon we hear again the swords clash!
Hell blot black for always the thought "Peace!"

Ezra Pound

Shop Girl

For a moment she rested against me
Like a swallow half blown to the wall,
And they talk of Swinburne's women,
And the shepherdess meeting with Guido.
And the harlots of Baudelaire.

Ezra Pound

Silet

When I behold how black, immortal ink
Drips from my deathless pen - ah, well-away!
Why should we stop at all for what I think?
There is enough in what I chance to say.

It is enough that we once came together;
What is the use of setting it to rime?
When it is autumn do we get spring weather,
Or gather may of harsh northwindish time?

It is enough that we once came together;
What if the wind have turned against the rain?
It is enough that we once came together;
Time has seen this, and will not turn again;

And who are we, who know that last intent,
To plague to-morrow with a testament!

Ezra Pound

Simulacra

Why does the horse-faced lady of just the unmentionable age
Walk down Longacre reciting Swinburne to herself, inaudibly?
Why does the small child in the soiled-white imitation fur coat
Crawl in the very black gutter beneath the grape stand?
Why does the really handsome young woman approach me in Sackville Street
Undeterred by the manifest age of my trappings?

Ezra Pound

Society

The family position was waning,
And on this account the little Aurelia,
Who had laughed on eighteen summers,
Now bears the palsied contact of Phidippus.

Ezra Pound

Song

Winter is icummen in,
Lhude sing Goddamm,
Raineth drop and staineth slop,
and how the wind doth ramm,
Sing: Goddamm.
Skiddeth bus and sloppeth us,
An ague hath my ham.
Freezeth river, turneth liver,
Damn you, sing: Goddamm.
Goddamm, Goddamm, 'tis why I am, Goddamm,
So 'gainst the winter's balm.
Sing goddamm, damm, sing Goddamm,

Sing goddamm, sing goddamm, DAMM.

Ezra Pound

Song In The Manner Of Housman

O woe, woe,
People are born and die,
We also shall be dead pretty soon
Therefore let us act as if we were
dead already.

The bird sits on the hawthorn tree
But he dies also, presently.
Some lads get hung, and some get shot.
Woeful is this human lot.
<i>Woe! woe, etcetera . . . .</i>

London is a woeful place,
Shropshire is much pleasanter.
Then let us smile a little space
Upon fond nature's morbid grace.
<i>Oh, Woe, woe, woe, etcetera . . . </i>

Ezra Pound

Song Of The Bowmen Of Shu

Here we are, picking the first fern-shoots
And saying: When shall we get back to our country?
Here we are because we have the Ken-nin for our foemen,
We have no comfort because of these Mongols.
We grub the soft fern-shoots,
When anyone says "Return," the others are full of sorrow.
Sorrowful minds, sorrow is strong, we are hungry and thirsty.
Our defence is not yet made sure, no one can let his friend return.
We grub the old fern-stalks.
We say: Will we be let to go back in October?
There is no ease in royal affairs, we have no comfort.
Our sorrow is bitter, but we would not return to our country.
What flower has come into blossom?
Whose chariot? The General's.
Horses, his horses even, are tired. They were strong.
We have no rest, trhee battles a month.
By heavn, his horses are tired.
The generals are on them, the soldiers are by them.
The horses are well trained, the generals have ivory arrows and
quivers ornamented with fish-skin.
The enemy is swift, we must be careful.
When we set out, the willows were drooping with spring,
We come back in the snow,
We go slowly, we are hungry and thirsty,
Our mind is full of sorrow, who will know of our grief?

<i>By Bunno, reputedly 1100 B. C.</i>

Ezra Pound

Song Of The Six Hundred M.P.'s

‘We are 'ere met together
in this momentous hower,
Ter lick th' bankers' dirty boots
an' keep the Bank in power.’

We are 'ere met together
ter grind the same old axes
And keep the people in its place
a'payin' us the taxes.

We are six hundred beefy men
(but mostly gas and suet)
An’ every year we meet to let
some other feller do it.'

I see their 'igh 'ats on the seats
an' them sprawling on the benches
And thinks about a Rowton 'ouse
and a lot of small street stenches.

'O Britain, muvver of parliaments,
'ave you seen yer larst sweet litter?
Could yeh swap th' brains of orl this lot
fer 'arft a pint o' bitter?'

‘I couldn't,' she sez, ‘an' I aint tried,
They're me own,' she sez to me,
‘As footlin' a lot as was ever spawned
to defend democracy.'

Ezra Pound

South-Folk In Cold Country

The Dai horse neighs against the bleak wind of Etsu,
The birds of Etsu have no love for En, in the north,
Emotion is born out of habit.
Yesterday we went out of the Wild-Goose gate,
To-day from the Dragon-Pen.
Surprised. Desert turmoil. Sea sun.
Flying snow bewilders the barbarian heaven.
Lice swarm like ants over our accoutrements.
Mind and spirit drive on the feathery banners.
Hard fight gets no reward.
Loyalty is hard to explain.
Who will be sorry for General Rishogu,
the swift moving,
Whose white head is lost for this province?

Ezra Pound

Speech For Psyche In The Golden Book Of Apuleius

All night, and as the wind lieth among
The cypress trees, he lay,
Nor held me save as air that brusheth by one
Close, and as the petals of flowers in falling
Waver and seem not drawn to earth, so he
Seemed over me to hover light as leaves
And closer me than air,
And music flowing through me seemed to open
Mine eyes upon new colours.
O winds, what wind can match the weight of him!

Ezra Pound

ßìyñññù (Greek Title)

Thy soul
Grown delicate with satieties,
Atthis.
O Atthis,
I long for thy lips.
I long for thy narrow breasts,
Thou restless, ungathered.

Ezra Pound

Statement Of Being

I am a grave poetic hen
That lays poetic eggs
And to enhance my temperament
A little quiet begs.

We make the yolk philosophy,
True beauty the albumen.
And then gum on a shell of form
To make the screed sound human.

Ezra Pound

Sub Mare

It is, and is not, I am sane enough,
Since you have come this place has hovered round me,
This fabrication built of autumn roses,
Then there's a goldish colour, different.

And one gropes in these things as delicate
Algæ reach up and out, beneath
Pale slow green surgings of the underwave,
'Mid these things older than the names they have,
These things that are familiears of the god.

Ezra Pound

Surgit Fama

There is a truce among the gods,
Kore is seen in the North
Skirting the blue-gray sea
In gilded and russet mantle.
The corn has again it's mother and she, Leuconoe,
That failed never women,
Fails not the earth now.

The tricksome Hermes is here;
He moves behind me
Eager to catch my words,
Eager to spread them with rumour;
To set upon them his change
Crafty and subtle;
To alter them to his purpose;
But do thou speak true, even to the letter:

'Once more in Delos, once more is the altar a-quiver.
Once more is the chant heard.
Once more are the never abandoned gardens
Full of gossip and old tales.'

Ezra Pound

Taking Leave Of A Friend

Blue mountains to the north of the walls,
White river winding about them;
Here we must make separation
And go out through a thousand miles of dead grass.

Mind like a floating wide cloud,
Sunset like the parting of old acquaintances
Who bow over their clasped hands at a distance.
Our horses neigh to each others
as we are departing.

Ezra Pound

Tame Cat

It rests me to be among beautiful women
Why should one always lie about such matters?
I repeat:
It rests me to converse with beautiful women
Even though we talk nothing but nonsense,

The purring of the invisible antennae
Is both stimulating and delightful.

Ezra Pound

Tempora

Io! Io! Tamuz!
The Dryad staiids in my court-yard
With plaintive, querulous crying.
(Tamuz. Io! Tamuz!)
Oh, no, she is not crying: 'Tamuz.'
She says, 'May my poems be printed this week?
The god Pan is afraid to ask you,
May my poems be printed this week?'

Ezra Pound

Tenzone

Will people accept them?
(i.e. these songs).
As a timorous wench from a centaur
(or a centurion),
Already they flee, howling in terror.

Will they be touched with the verisimilitudes?
Their virgin stupidity is untemptable.
I beg you, my friendly critics,
Do not set about to procure me an audience.

I mate with my free kind upon the crags;
the hidden recesses
Have heard the echo ofmy heels,
in the cool light,
in the darkness.

Ezra Pound

The Alchemist

Chant for the Transmutation of Metals

Sail of Claustra, Aelis, Azalais,
As you move among the bright trees;
As your voices, under the larches of Paradise
Make a clear sound,
Sail of Claustra, Aelis, Azalais,
Raimona, Tibors, Berangere,
'Neath the dark gleam of the sky;
Under night, the peacock-throated,
Bring the saffron-coloured shell,
Bring the red gold of the maple,
Bring the light of the birch tree in autumn
Mirals, Cembelins, Audiarda,
Remember this fire.
Elain, Tireis, Alcmena
'Mid the silver rustling of wheat,
Agradiva, Anhes, Ardenca,
From the plum-coloured lake, in stillness,
From the molten dyes of the water
Bring the burnished nature of fire;
Briseis, Lianor, Loica,
From the wide earth and the olive,
From the poplars weeping their amber,
By the bright flame of the fishing torch
Remember this fire.
Midonz, with the gold of the sun, the leaf of the poplar,
by the light of the amber,
Midonz, daughter of the sun, shaft of the tree, silver of
the leaf, light of the yellow of the amber,
Midonz, gift of the God, gift of the light, gift of the
amber of the sun,
Give light to the metal.
Anhes of Rocacoart, Ardenca, Aemelis,
From the power of grass,
From the white, alive in the seed,
From the heat of the bud,
From the copper .of the leaf in autumn,
From the bronze of the maple, from the sap in the

bough;
Lianor, Ioanna, Loica,
By the stir of the fin,
By the trout asleep in the gray-green of water;
Vanna, Mandetta, Viera, Alodetta, Picarda, Manuela
From the red gleam of copper,
Ysaut, Ydone, slight rustling of leaves,
Vierna, Jocelynn, daring of spirits,
By the mirror of burnished copper,
O Queen of Cypress,
Out of Erebus, the flat-lying breadth,
Breath that is stretched out beneath the world:
Out of Erebus, out of the flat waste of air, lying beneath
the world;
Out of the brown leaf-brown colourless
Bring the imperceptible cool.
Elain, Tireis, Alcmena,
Quiet this metal!
Let the manes put off their terror, let them put off their
aqueous bodies with fire.
Let them assume the milk-white bodies of agate.
Let them draw together the bones of the metal.
Selvaggia, Guiscarda, Mandetta,
Rain flakes of gold on the water
Azure and flaking silver of water,
Alcyon, Phaetona, Alcmena,
Pallor of silver, pale lustre of Latona,
By these, from the malevolence of the dew
Guard this alembic.
Elain, Tireis, Allodetta
Quiet this metal.

Ezra Pound

The Altar

Let us build here an exquisite friendship,
The flame, the autumn, and the green rose of love
Fought out their strife here, 'tis a place of wonder;
Where these have been, meet 'tis, the ground is holy.

Ezra Pound

The Baby

The baby new to earth and sky
Has never until now
Unto himself the question put
Or asked us if the cow

Is higher in the mental scale
Than men like me and you,
Or if the cow refrains from food
Till she finds work to do.

'The baby new to earth and sky,'
As Tennyson has written,
Just goes ahead and sucks a teat
Like to-day's great men in Britain.

Ezra Pound

The Bath-Tub

As a bathtub lined with white porcelain,
When the hot water gives out or goes tepid,
So is the slow cooling of our chivalrous passion,
O my much praised but-not-altogether-satisfactory lady.

Ezra Pound

The Beautiful Toilet

Blue, blue is the grass about the river
And the willows have overfilled the close garden.
And within, the mistress, in the midmost of her youth.
White, white of face, hesitates, passing the door.
Slender, she puts forth a slender hand;

And she was a courtezan in the old days,
And she has married a sot,
Who now goes drunkenly out
And leaves her too much alone.

Ezra Pound

The Bellaires

The good Bellaires
Do not understand the conduct of this world's affairs.
In fact they understood them so badly
That they have had to cross the Channel.
Nine lawyers, four counsels, five judges and three proctors of the King,
Together with the respective wives, husbands, sisters and heterogeneous connections of the good Bellaires,
Met to discuss their affairs;
But the good Bellaires have so little understood their affairs
That now there is no one at all
Who can understand any affair of theirs. Yet
Fourteen hunters still eat in the stables of
The good Squire Bellaire;
But these may not suffer attainder,
For they may not belong to the good Squire Bellaire
But to his wife.
On the contrary, if they do not belong to his wife,
He will plead
A 'freedom from attainder'
For twelve horses and also for twelve boarhounds
From Charles the Fourth;
And a further freedom for the remainder
Of horses, from Henry the Fourth.
But the judges,
Being free of mediaeval scholarship,
Will pay no attention to this,
And there will be only the more confusion,
Replevin, estoppel, espavin and what not.

Nine lawyers, four counsels, etc.,
Met to discuss their affairs,
But the sole result was bills
From lawyers to whom no one was indebted,
And even the lawyers
Were uncertain who was supposed to be indebted to them.

Wherefore the good Squire Bellaire
Resides now at Agde and Biaucaire,
To Carcassonne, Pui, and Alais
He fareth from day to day,
Or takes the sea air
Between Marseilles
And Beziers.
And for all this I have considerable regret,
For the good Bellaires
Are very charming people.

Ezra Pound

The Charge Of The Bread Brigade

Half a loaf, half a loaf,
Half a loaf? Urn-hum?
Down through the vale of gloom
Slouched the ten million,
Onward th' 'ungry blokes,
Crackin' their smutty jokes!
We'll send 'em mouchin' 'ome,
Damn the ten million!

There goes the night brigade,
They got no steady trade,
Several old so'jers know
Monty has blunder'd.
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to buy the pie,
Slouching and mouching,
Lousy ten million!

Plenty to right of 'em,
Plenty to left of 'em,
Yes, wot is left of 'em,
Damn the ten million.
Stormed at by press and all,
How shall we dress 'em all?
Glooming and mouching!

See 'em go slouching there,
With cowed and crouching air
Dundering dullards!
How the whole nation shook
While Milord Beaverbrook
Fed 'em with hogwash!

Ezra Pound

The City Of Choan

The phoenix are at play on their terrace.
The phoenix are gone, the river Hows on alone.
Flowers and grass
Cover over the dark path
where lay the dynastic house of the Go.
The bright cloths and bright caps of Shin
Are now the base of old hills.

The Three Mountains fall through the far heaven,
The isle of White Heron
splits the two streams apart.
Now the high clouds cover the sun
And I can not see Choan afar
And I am sad.

Ezra Pound

The Cloak

Thou keep'st thy rose-leaf
Till the rose-time will be over,
Think'st thou that Death will kiss thee?
Think'st thou that the Dark House
Will find thee such a lover
As I? Will the new roses miss thee?

Prefer my cloak unto the cloak of dust
'Neath which the last year lies,
For thou shouldst more mistrust
Time than my eyes.

Ezra Pound

The Coming Of War: Actaeon

An image of Lethe,
and the fields
Full of faint light
but golden,
Gray cliffs,
and beneath them

A sea
Harsher than granite,
unstill, never ceasing;
High forms
with the movement of gods,
Perilous aspect;
And one said:
'This is Actaeon.'
Actaeon of golden greaves!
Over fair meadows,
Over the cool face of that field,
Unstill, ever moving
Hosts of an ancient people,
The silent cortège.

Ezra Pound

The Condolence

O my fellow sufferers, songs of my youth,
A lot of asses praise you because you are 'virile',
We, you, I! We are 'Red Bloods'!
Imagine it, my fellow sufferers
Our maleness lifts us out of the ruck,
Who'd have foreseen it?

O my fellow sufferers, we went out under the trees,
We were in especial bored with male stupidity.
We went forth gathering delicate thoughts,
Our ‘fantastikon’ delighted to serve us.
We were not exasperated with women,
for the female is ductile.

And now you hear what is said to us:
We are compared to that sort of person
Who wanders about announcing his sex
As if he had just discovered it.
Let us leave this matter, my songs,
and return to that which concerns us.

Ezra Pound

The Encounter

All the while they were talking the new morality
Her eyes explored me.
And when I rose to go
Her fingers were like the tissue
Of a Japanese paper napkin.

Ezra Pound

The Eyes

Rest Master, for we be a-weary, weary
And would feel the fingers of the wind
Upon these lids that lie over us
Sodden and lead-heavy.

Rest brother, for lo ! the dawn is without !
The yellow flame paleth
And the wax runs low.

Free us, for without be goodly colours,
Green of the wood-moss and flower colours,
And coolness beneath the trees.

Free us, for we perish
In this ever-flowing monotony
Of ugly print marks, black
Upon white parchment.

Free us, for there is one
Whose smile more availeth
Than all the age-old knowledge of thy books:
And we would look thereon.

Ezra Pound

The Fault Of It

Some may have blamed us that we cease to speak
Of things we spoke of in our verses early,
Saying: a lovely voice is such as such;
Saying: that lady's eyes were sad last week,
Wherein the world's whole joy is born and dies;
Saying: she hath this way or that, this much
Of grace, this way or that, this much
Of grace, this little misericorde;
Ask us no further word;
If we were proud, then proud to be so wise
Ask us no more of all the things ye heard;
We may not speak of them, they touch us nearly.

Ezra Pound

The Faun

Ha! sir, I have seen you sniffing and snoozling
about among my flowers.
And what, pray, do you know about
horticulture, you capriped?
'Come, Auster, come Apeliota,
And see the faun in our garden.
But if you move or speak
This thing will run at you
And scare itself to spasms.'

Ezra Pound

The Flame

‘Tis not a game that plays at mates and mating,
Provençe knew;
'Tis not a game of barter, lands and houses,
Provençe knew.
We who are wise beyond your dream of wisdom,
Drink our immortal moments; we 'pass through'.
We have gone forth beyond your bonds and borders,
Provençe knew;
And all the tales of Oisin say but this:
That man doth pass the net of days and hours.
Where time is shrivelled down to time's seed corn
We of the Ever-living, in that light
Meet through our veils and whisper, and of love.

O smoke and shadow of a darkling world,
These, and the rest, and all the rest we knew.
'Tis not a game that plays at mates and mating,
'Tis not a game of barter, lands and houses,
'Tis not 4of days and nights' and troubling years,
Of cheeks grown sunken and glad hair gone gray;
There is the subtler music, the clear light
Where time burns back about th' eternal embers.
We are not shut from all the thousand heavens:
Lo, there are many gods whom we have seen,
Folk of unearthly fashion, places splendid,
Bulwarks of beryl and of chrysoprase.

Sapphire Benacus, in thy mists and thee
Nature herself's turned metaphysical,
Who can look on that blue and not believe?

Thou hooded opal, thou eternal pearl,
O thou dark secret with a shimmering floor,
Through all thy various mood I know thee mine;
If I have merged my soul, or utterly
Am solved and bound in, through aught here on earth,
There canst thou find me, O thou anxious thou,
Who call’st about my gates for some lost me;
I say my soul flowed back, became translucent.

Search not my lips, O Love, let go my hands,
This thing that moves as man is no more mortal.
If thou hast seen my shade sans character,
If thou hast seen that mirror of all moments,
That glass to all things that o'ershadow it,
Call not that mirror me, for I have slipped
Your grasp, I have eluded.

Ezra Pound

The Game Of Chess

Red knights, brown bishops, bright queens,
Striking the board, falling in strong 'L's of
colour.
Reaching and striking in angles,
holding lines in one colour.
This board is alive with light;
these pieces are living in form,
Their moves break and reform the pattern:
luminous green from the rooks,
Clashing with 'X's of queens,
looped with the knight-leaps.

'Y' pawns, cleaving, embanking!
Whirl ! Centripetal ! Mate ! King down in the
vortex,
Clash, leaping of bands, straight strips of hard
colour,
Blocked lights working in. Escapes. Renewal of
contest.

Ezra Pound

The Garden

En robe de parade. Samain

Like a skein of loose silk blown against a wall
She walks by the railing of a path in Kensington Gardens,
And she is dying piece-meal
    Tof a sort of emotional anaemia.

And round about there is a rabble
Of the filthy, sturdy, unkillable infants of the very poor.
They shall inherit the earth.

In her is the end of breeding.
Her boredom is exquisite and excessive.
She would like some one to speak to her,
And is almost afraid that I
    Twill commit that indiscretion.

Ezra Pound

The Garrett

Come, let us pity those who are better off than we are.
Come, my friend, and remember
      that the rich have butlers and no friends,
And we have friends and no butlers.
Come, let us pity the married and the unmarried.

Dawn enters with little feet
      like a gilded Pavlova
And I am near my desire.
Nor has life in it aught better
Than this hour of clear coolness
      the hour of waking together.

Ezra Pound

The Gypsy

That was the top of the walk, when he said:
'Have you seen any others, any of our lot,
With apes or bears?'
A brown upstanding fellow
Not like the half-castes,
up on the wet road near Clermont.
The wind came, and the rain,
And mist clotted about the trees in the valley,
And I’d the long ways behind me,
gray Aries and Biaucaire,
And he said, 'Have you seen any of our lot?'
I'd seen a lot of his lot . . .
ever since Rhodez,
Coming down from the fair
of St. John,
With caravans, but never an ape or a bear.

Ezra Pound

The House Of Splendour

'Tis Evanoe's,
A house not made with hands,
But out somewhere beyond the worldly ways
Her gold is spread, above, around, inwoven;
Strange ways and walls are fashioned out of it.

And I have seen my Lady in the sun,
Her hair was spread about, a sheaf of wings,
And red the sunlight was, behind it all.

And I have seen her there within her house,
With six great sapphires hung along the wall,
Low, panel-shaped, a-level with her knees,
All her robe was woven of pale gold.

There are there many rooms and all of gold,
Of woven walls deep patterned, of email,
Of beaten work; and through the claret stone,
Set to some weaving, comes the aureate light.

Here am I come perforce my love of her,
Behold mine adoration
Maketh me clear, and there are powers in this
Which, played on by the virtues of her soul,
Break down the four-square walls of standing time.

Ezra Pound

The Jewel Stairs' Grievance

The jewelled steps are already quite white with dew,
It is so late that the dew soaks my gauze stockings,
And I let down the crystal curtain
And watch the moon through the clear autumn.

Ezra Pound

The Lake Isle

O God, O Venus, O Mercury, patron of thieves,
Give me in due time, I beseech you, a little tobacco-shop,
With the little bright boxes
piled up neatly upon the shelves
And the loose fragment cavendish
and the shag,
And the bright Virginia
loose under the bright glass cases,
And a pair of scales
not too greasy,
And the votailles dropping in for a word or two in passing,
For a flip word, and to tidy their hair a bit.

O God, O Venus, O Mercury, patron of thieves,
Lend me a little tobacco-shop,
or install me in any profession
Save this damn'd profession of writing,
where one needs one's brains all the time.

Ezra Pound

The Logical Conclusion

When earth's last thesis is copied
From the theses that went before,
When idea from fact has departed
And bare-boned factlets shall bore,
When all joy shall have fled from study
And scholarship reign supreme;
When truth shall 'baaa' on the hill crests
And no one shall dare to dream;

When all the good poems have been buried
With comment annoted in full
And art shall bow down in homage
To scholarship's zinc-plated bull,
When there shall be nothing to research
But the notes of annoted notes,
And Baalam's ass shall inquire
The price of imported oats;

Then no one shall tell him the answer
For each shall know the one fact
That lies in the special ass-ignment
From which he is making his tract.
So the ass shall sigh uninstructed
While each in his separate book
Shall grind for the love of grinding
And only the devil shall look.

Against the 'germanic' system of graduate study and insane specialization in the Inanities.

Ezra Pound

The Needle

Come, or the stellar tide will slip away.
Eastward avoid the hour of its decline,
Now! for the needle trembles in my soul!

Here have we had the vantage, the good hour.
Here we have had our day, your day and mine.
Come now, before this power
That bears us up, shall turn against the pole.
Mock not the flood of stars, the thing's to be.
O Love, come now, this land turns evil slowly.
The waves bore in, soon will they bear away.

The treasure is ours, make we fast land with it.
Move we and take the tide, with its next favour,
Abide
Under some neutral force
Until this course turneth aside.

Ezra Pound

The New Cake Of Soap

Lo, how it gleams and glistens in the sun
Like the cheek of a Chesterton.

Ezra Pound

The Patterns

Erinna is a model parent,
Her children have never discovered her adulteries.
Lalage is also a model parent,
Her offspring are fat and happy.

Ezra Pound

The Picture

The eyes of this dead lady speak to me,
For here was love, was not to be drowned out.
And here desire, not to be kissed away.
The eyes of this dead lady speak to me.

Ezra Pound

The Plunge

I would bathe myself in strangeness:
These comforts heaped upon me, smother me!
I burn, I scald so for the new,
New friends, new faces,
Places!
Oh to be out of this,
This that is all I wanted
- save the new.

And you,
Love, you the much, the more desired!
Do I not loathe all walls, streets, stones,
All mire, mist, all fog,
All ways of traffic?
You, I wold have flow over me like water,
Oh, but far out of this!
Grass, and low fields, and hills,
And sun,
Oh, sun enough!
Out, and alone, among some
Alien people!

Ezra Pound

The Rest

O helpless few in my country, remnant enslaved!

Artists broken against her,
A-stray, lost in the villages,
Mistrusted, spoken-against,

Lovers of beauty, starved,
Thwarted with systems,
Helpless against the control;

You who can not wear yourselves out
By persisting to successes,
You who can only speak,
Who can not steel yourselves into reiteration;

You of the finer sense,
Broken against false knowledge,
You who can know at first hand,
Hated, shut in, mistrusted:

Take thought:
I have weathered the storm,
I have beaten out my exile.

Ezra Pound

The Return

See, they return; ah, see the tentative
Movements, and the slow feet,
The trouble in the pace and the uncertain
Wavering!

See, they return, one by one,
With fear, as half-awakened;
As if the snow should hesitate
And murmur in the wind,
and half turn back;
These were the "Wing'd-with-Awe,"
Inviolable.

Gods of the Wingèd shoe!
With them the silver hounds,
sniffing the trace of air!

Haie! Haie!
These were the swift to harry;
These the keen-scented;
These were the souls of blood.

Slow on the leash,
pallid the leash-men!

Ezra Pound

The River Song

This boat is of shato-wood, and its gunwales are cut magnolia,
Musicians with jewelled flutes and with pipes of gold
Fill full the sides in rows, and our wine
Is rich for a thousand cups.
We carry singing girls, drift with the drifting water,
Yet Sennin needs
A yellow stork for a charger, and all our seamen
Would follow the white gulls or ride them.
Kutsu's prose song
Hangs with the sun and moon.

King So's terraced palace
is now but barren hill,
But I draw pen on this barge
Causing the five peaks to tremble,
And I have joy in these words
like the joy of blue islands.
(If glory could last forever
Then the waters of Han would flow northward.)

And I have moped in the Emperor's garden, awaiting an order-to-write !
I looked at the dragon-pond, with its willow-coloured water
Just reflecting the sky's tinge,
And heard the five-score nightingales aimlessly singing.

The eastern wind brings the green colour into the island grasses at Yei-shu,
The purple house and the crimson are full of Spring softness.
South of the pond the willow-tips are half-blue and bluer,
Their cords tangle in mist, against the brocade-like palace.
Vine-strings a hundred feet long hang down from carved railings,
And high over the willows, the fine birds sing to each

other, and listen,
Crying—'Kwan, Kuan,' for the early wind, and the feel of it.
The wind bundles itself into a bluish cloud and wanders off.
Over a thousand gates, over a thousand doors are the sounds of spring singing,
And the Emperor is at Ko.
Five clouds hang aloft, bright on the purple sky,
The imperial guards come forth from the golden house with their armour a-gleaming.
The Emperor in his jewelled car goes out to inspect his flowers,
He goes out to Hori, to look at the wing-flapping storks,
He returns by way of Sei rock, to hear the new nightingales,
For the gardens at Jo-run are full of new nightingales,
Their sound is mixed in this flute,
Their voice is in the twelve pipes here.

Ezra Pound

The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter

After Li Po

While my hair was still cut straight
across my forehead
I played at the front gate, pulling
flowers.
You came by on bamboo stilts, playing
horse,
You walked about my seat, playing with
blue plums.
And we went on living in the village of
Chokan:
Two small people, without dislike or
suspicion.

At fourteen I married My Lord you.
I never laughed, being bashful.
Lowering my head, I looked at the wall.
Called to, a thousand times, I never
looked back.

At fifteen I stopped scowling,
I desired my dust to be mingled with
yours
Forever and forever and forever.
Why should I climb the lookout?

At sixteen you departed,
You went into far Ku-to-en, by the river
of swirling eddies,
And you have been gone five months.
The monkeys make sorrowful noise
overhead.

You dragged your feet when you went
out,
By the gate now, the moss is grown,
the different mosses,
Too deep to clear them away!

The leaves fall early this autumn, in
wind.
The paired butterflies are already
yellow with August
Over the grass in the West garden;
They hurt me. I grow older.
If you are coming down through the
narrows of the river Kiang,
Please let me know beforehand,
And I will come out to meet you
As far as Cho-fu-sa.

Translated by Ezra Pound

Anonymous submission.

Ezra Pound

The Seafarer

(From the early Anglo-Saxon text)

May I for my own self song's truth reckon,
Journey's jargon, how I in harsh days
Hardship endured oft.
Bitter breast-cares have I abided,
Known on my keel many a care's hold,
And dire sea-surge, and there I oft spent
Narrow nightwatch nigh the ship's head
While she tossed close to cliffs. Coldly afflicted,
My feet were by frost benumbed.
Chill its chains are; chafing sighs
Hew my heart round and hunger begot
Mere-weary mood. Lest man know not
That he on dry land loveliest liveth,
List how I, care-wretched, on ice-cold sea,
Weathered the winter, wretched outcast
Deprived of my kinsmen;
Hung with hard ice-flakes, where hail-scur flew,
There I heard naught save the harsh sea
And ice-cold wave, at whiles the swan cries,
Did for my games the gannet's clamour,
Sea-fowls, loudness was for me laughter,
The mews' singing all my mead-drink.
Storms, on the stone-cliffs beaten, fell on the stern
In icy feathers; full oft the eagle screamed
With spray on his pinion.
Not any protector
May make merry man faring needy.
This he little believes, who aye in winsome life
Abides 'mid burghers some heavy business,
Wealthy and wine-flushed, how I weary oft
Must bide above brine.
Neareth nightshade, snoweth from north,
Frost froze the land, hail fell on earth then
Corn of the coldest. Nathless there knocketh now
The heart's thought that I on high streams
The salt-wavy tumult traverse alone.
Moaneth alway my mind's lust

That I fare forth, that I afar hence
Seek out a foreign fastness.
For this there's no mood-lofty man over earth's midst,
Not though he be given his good, but will have in his youth greed;
Nor his deed to the daring, nor his king to the faithful
But shall have his sorrow for sea-fare
Whatever his lord will.
He hath not heart for harping, nor in ring-having
Nor winsomeness to wife, nor world's delight
Nor any whit else save the wave's slash,
Yet longing comes upon him to fare forth on the water.
Bosque taketh blossom, cometh beauty of berries,
Fields to fairness, land fares brisker,
All this admonisheth man eager of mood,
The heart turns to travel so that he then thinks
On flood-ways to be far departing.
Cuckoo calleth with gloomy crying,
He singeth summerward, bodeth sorrow,
The bitter heart's blood. Burgher knows not --
He the prosperous man -- what some perform
Where wandering them widest draweth.
So that but now my heart burst from my breast-lock,
My mood 'mid the mere-flood,
Over the whale's acre, would wander wide.
On earth's shelter cometh oft to me,
Eager and ready, the crying lone-flyer,
Whets for the whale-path the heart irresistibly,
O'er tracks of ocean; seeing that anyhow
My lord deems to me this dead life
On loan and on land, I believe not
That any earth-weal eternal standeth
Save there be somewhat calamitous
That, ere a man's tide go, turn it to twain.
Disease or oldness or sword-hate
Beats out the breath from doom-gripped body.
And for this, every earl whatever, for those speaking after --
Laud of the living, boasteth some last word,
That he will work ere he pass onward,
Frame on the fair earth 'gainst foes his malice,
Daring ado, ...
So that all men shall honour him after
And his laud beyond them remain 'mid the English,

Aye, for ever, a lasting life's-blast,
Delight mid the doughty.
Days little durable,
And all arrogance of earthen riches,
There come now no kings nor Cæsars
Nor gold-giving lords like those gone.
Howe'er in mirth most magnified,
Whoe'er lived in life most lordliest,
Drear all this excellence, delights undurable!
Waneth the watch, but the world holdeth.
Tomb hideth trouble. The blade is layed low.
Earthly glory ageth and seareth.
No man at all going the earth's gait,
But age fares against him, his face paleth,
Grey-haired he groaneth, knows gone companions,
Lordly men are to earth o'ergiven,
Nor may he then the flesh-cover, whose life ceaseth,
Nor eat the sweet nor feel the sorry,
Nor stir hand nor think in mid heart,
And though he strew the grave with gold,
His born brothers, their buried bodies
Be an unlikely treasure hoard.

Ezra Pound

The Seeing Eye

The small dogs look at the big dogs;
They observe unwieldy dimensions
And curious imperfections of odor.
Here is the formal male group:
The young men look upon their seniors,
They consider the elderly mind
And observe its inexplicable correlations.

Said Tsin-Tsu:
It is only in small dogs and the young
That we find minute observation

Ezra Pound

The Social Order

I
This government official
Whose wife is several years his senior,
Has such a caressing air
When he shakes hands with young ladies.

II
(Pompes Funèbres)

This old lady,
Who was fcso old that she was an atheist',
Is now surrounded
By six candles and a crucifix,
While the second wife of a nephew
Makes hay with the things in her house.
Her two cats
Go before her into Avernus;
A sort of chloroformed suttee,
And it is to be hoped that their spirits will walk
With their tails up,
And with a plaintive, gentle mewing,
For it is certain that she has left on this earth
No sound
Save a squabble of female connections,

Ezra Pound

The Spring

Cydonian Spring with her attendant train,
Maelids and water-girls,
Stepping beneath a boisterous wind from Thrace,
Throughout this sylvan place
Spreads the bright tips,
And every vine-stock is
Clad in new brilliancies.
And wild desire
Falls like black lightning.
bewildered heart,
Though every branch have back what last year lost,
She, who moved here amid the cyclamen,
Moves only now a clinging tenuous ghost.

Ezra Pound

The Study In Aesthetics

The very small children in patched clothing,
Being smitten with an unusual wisdom,
Stopped in their play as she passed them
And cried up from their cobbles:

Guarda! Ahi, guarda! Ch’ è be’ a!

But three years after this
I heard the young Dante, whose last name I do not
know--
For there are, in Sirmione, twenty-eight young Dantes
and thirty-four Catulli;
And there had been a great catch of sardines,
And his elders
Were packing them in the great wooden boxes
For the market in Brescia, and he
Leapt about, snatching at the bright fish
And getting in both of their ways;
And in vain they commanded him to stafermo!
And when they would not let him arrange
The fish in the boxes
He stroked those which were already arranged,
Murmuring for his own satisfaction
This identical phrase:

Ch’ è be’ a

And at this I was mildly abashed.

Ezra Pound

The Summons

I can not bow to woo thee
With honey words and flower kisses
And the dew of sweet half-truths
Fallen on the grass of old quaint love-tales
Of broidered days foredone.
Nor in the murmurous twilight
May I sit below thee,
Worshiping in whispers
Tremulous as far-heard bells.
All these things have I known once
And passed
In that gay youth I had but yester-year.
And that is gone
As the shadow of wind.
Nay, I can not woo thee thus;
But as I am ever swept upward
To the centre of all truth
So must I bear thee with me
Rapt into this great involving flame,
Calling ever from the midst thereof,
"Follow! Follow!"
And in the glory of our meeting
Shall the power be reborn.
And together in the midst of this power
Must we, each outstriving each,
Cry eternally:
"I come, go thou yet further."
And again, "Follow,"
For we may not tarry.

Ezra Pound

The Tea Shop

The girl in the tea shop
Is not so beautiful as she was,
The August has worn against her.
She does not get up the stairs so eagerly;
Yes, she also will turn middle-aged,
And the glow of youth that she spread about us
As she brought us our muffins
Will be spread about us no longer.
She also will turn middle-aged.

Ezra Pound

The Temperaments

Nine adulteries, 12 liaisons, 64 fornications and
something approaching a rape
Rest nightly upon the soul of our delicate friend
Florialis,
And yet the man is so quiet and reserved in demeanour
That he passes for both bloodless and sexless.
Bastidides, on the contrary, who both talks and writes
of nothing save copulation,
Has become the father of twins,
But he accomplished this feat at some cost;
He had to be four times cuckold.

Ezra Pound

The Three Poets

Candidia has taken a new lover
And three poets are gone into mourning.
The first has written a long elegy to 'Chloris',
To 'Chloris chaste and cold,' his 'only Chloris'.
The second has written a sonnet
upon the mutability of woman,
And the third writes an epigram to Candidia.

Ezra Pound

The Tomb At Akr Çaar

‘I am thy soul, Nikoptis. I have watched
These five millennia, and thy dead eyes
Moved not, nor ever answer my desire,
And thy light limbs, wherethrough I leapt aflame,
Burn not with me nor any saffron thing.

See, the light grass sprang up to pillow thee,
And kissed thee with a myriad grassy tongues;
But not thou me.
I have read out the gold upon the wall,
And wearied out my thought upon the signs.
And there is no new thing in all this place.

I have been kind. See, I have left the jars sealed,
Lest thou shouldst wake and whimper for thy wine.
And all thy robes I have kept smooth on thee.

O thou unmindful ! How should I forget!
-Even the river many days ago,
The river? thou wast over young.
And three souls came upon Thee-
And I came.
And I flowed in upon thee, beat them off;
1 have been intimate with thee, known thy ways.
Have I not touched thy palms and finger-tips,
Flowed in, and through thee and about thy heels?
How 'came I in'? Was I not thee and Thee?

And no sun comes to rest me in this place,
And I am torn against the jagged dark,
And no light beats upon me, and you say
No word, day after day.

Oh! I could get me out, despite the marks
And all their crafty work upon the door,
Out through the glass-green fields. . . .

Yet it is quiet here:
I do not go.’

Ezra Pound

The Tree

I stood still and was a tree amid the wood,
Knowing the truth of things unseen before;
Of Daphne and the laurel bow
And that god-feasting couple old
that grew elm-oak amid the wold.
'Twas not until the gods had been
Kindly entreated, and been brought within
Unto the hearth of their heart's home
That they might do this wonder thing;
Nathless I have been a tree amid the wood
And many a new thing understood
That was rank folly to my head before.

Ezra Pound

The White Stag

I ha' seen them 'mid the clouds on the heather.
Lo! they pause not for love nor for sorrow,
Yet their eyes are as the eyes of a maid to her lover,
When the white hart breaks his cover
And the white wind breaks the morn.

‘'Tis the white stag, Fame, we're a-hunting,
Bid the world's hounds come to horn!’

Ezra Pound

These Fought In Any Case

These fought in any case,
and some believing
pro domo, in any case .....

Died some, pro patria,
walked eye-deep in hell
believing in old men's lies, then unbelieving
came home, home to a lie,
home to many deceits,
home to old lies and new infamy;
usury age-old and age-thick
and liars in public places.

Daring as never before, wastage as never before.
Young blood and high blood,
fair cheeks, and fine bodies;

fortitude as never before

frankness as never before,
disillusions as never told in the old days,
hysterias, trench confessions,
laughter out of dead bellies.

Ezra Pound

Threnos

IN o more for us the little sighing.
No more the winds at twilight trouble us.

Lo the fair dead!

No more do I burn.

No more for us the fluttering of wings
That whirred in the air above us.

Lo the fair dead!

No more desire flayeth me,
No more for us the trembling
At the meeting of hands.

Lo the fair dead!

No more for us the wine of the lips,
No more for us the knowledge.
Lo the fair dead!

No more the torrent,
No more for us the meeting-place
(Lo the fair dead!)
Tintagoel.

Ezra Pound

To Dives

Who am I to condemn you, O Dives,
I who am as much embittered
With poverty
As you are with useless riches ?

Ezra Pound

To Êáëüí (Greek Title)

Even in my dreams you have denied yourself to me
And sent me only your handmaids.

Ezra Pound

To Whistler, American

On the loan exhibit of his paintings at the Tate Gallery.

You also, our first great,
Had tried all ways;
Tested and pried and worked in many fashions,
And this much gives me heart to play the game.

Here is part that's slight, and part gone wrong,
And much of little moment, and some few
Perfect as Diirer!
'In the Studio' and these two portraits, if I had my choice!
And then these sketches in the mood of Greece?

You had your searches, your uncertainties,
And this is good to know for us, I mean,
Who bear the brunt of our America
And try to wrench her impulse into art.

You were not always sure, not always set
To hiding night or tuning ^symphonies';
Had not one style from birth, but tried and pried
And stretched and tampered with the media.

You and Abe Lincoln from that mass of dolts
Show us there's chance at least of winning through.

Ezra Pound

To-Em-Meps 'the Unmoving Cloud'

I
The clouds have gathered, and gathered,
and the rain falls and falls,
The eight ply of the heavens
are all folded into one darkness,
And the wide, flat road stretches out.
I stop in my room toward the East, quiet, quiet,
I pat my new cask of wine.
My friends are estranged, or far distant,
I bow my head and stand still.

II
Rain, rain, and the clouds have gathered,
The eight ply of the heavens are darkness,
The flat land is turned into river.
'Wine, wine, here is wine!'
I drink by my eastern window.
I think of talking and man,
And no boat, no carriage, approaches.

III
The trees in my east-looking garden
are bursting out with new twigs,
They try to stir new affection,
And men say the sun and moon keep on moving
because they can't find a soft seat.
The birds flutter to rest in my tree,
and I think I have heard them saying,
'It is not that there are no other men
But we like this fellow the best,
But however we long to speak
He can not know of our sorrow.'

Ezra Pound

Translations And Adaptations From Heine

FROM 'DIE HEIMKEHR'

I
Is your hate, then, of such measure?
Do you, truly, so detest me?
Through all the world will I complain
Of how you have addressed me.

O ye lips that are ungrateful,
Hath it never once distressed you,
That you can say such awful things
Of any one who ever kissed you?

II
So thou hast forgotten fully
That I so long held thy heart wholly,
Thy little heart, so sweet and false and small
That there's no thing more sweet or false at all.

Love and lay thou hast forgotten fully,
And my heart worked at them unduly.
I know not if the love or if the lay were better stuff,
But I know now, they both were good enough.

III
Tell me where thy lovely love is,
Whom thou once did sing so sweetly,
When the fairy flames enshrouded
Thee, and held thy heart completely.

All the flames are dead and sped now
And my heart is cold and sere;
Behold this book, the urn of ashes,
Tis my true love's sepulchre.

IV

I dreamt that I was God Himself
Whom heavenly joy immerses,
And all the angels sat about
And praised my verses.

V
The mutilated choir boys
When I begin to sing
Complain about the awful noise
And call my voice too thick a thing.

When light their voices lift them up,
Bright notes against the ear,
Through trills and runs like crystal,
Ring delicate and clear.

They sing of Love that's grown desirous,
Of Love, and joy that is Love's inmost part,
And all the ladies swim through tears
Toward such a work of art.

VI
This delightful young man
Should not lack for honourers,
He propitiates me with oysters,
With Rhine wine and liqueurs.

How his coat and pants adorn him!
Yet his ties are more adorning,
In these he daily comes to ask me:
'Are you feeling well this morning?'

He speaks of my extended fame,
My wit, charm, definitions,
And is diligent to serve me,
Is detailed in his provisions.

In evening company he sets his face
In most spirituel positions,
And declaims before the ladies

My god-like compositions.

what comfort is it for me
To find him such, when the days bring
No comfort, at my time of life when
All good things go vanishing.

TRANSLATOR TO TRANSLATED
O Harry Heine, curses be,
I live too late to sup with thee!
Who can demolish at such polished ease
Philistia's pomp and Art's pomposities!

VII
SONG FROM 'DIE HARZREISE'
I am the Princess Ilza
In Ilsenstein I fare,
Come with me to that castle
And we'll be happy there.

Thy head will I cover over
With my waves' clarity
Till thou forget thy sorrow,
wounded sorrowfully.

Thou wilt in my white arms then
Nay, on my breast thou must
Forget and rest and dream there
For thine old legend-lust.

My lips and my heart are thine there
As they were his and mine.
His? Why the good King Harry's,
And he is dead lang syne.

Dead men stay alway dead men.
Life is the live man's part,
And I am fair and golden
With joy breathless at heart.

If my heart stay below there,
My crystal halls ring clear
To the dance of lords and ladies
In all their splendid gear.

The silken trains go rustling,
The spur-clinks sound between,
The dark dwarfs blow and bow there
Small horn and violin.

Yet shall my white arms hold thee,
That bound King Harry about.
Ah, I covered his ears with them
When the trumpet rang out.

VIII
NIGHT SONG
And have you thoroughly kissed my lips;
There was no particular haste,
And are you not ready when evening's come?
There's no particular haste.

You've got the whole night before you,
Heart's-all-beloved-my-own;
In an uninterrupted night one can
Get a good deal of kissing done.

Ezra Pound

Ts'Ai Chi'H

The petals fall in the fountain,
the orange-coloured rose-leaves,
Their ochre clings to the stone.

Ezra Pound

Villanelle: The Psychological Hour

I had over prepared the event,
that much was ominous.
With middle-ageing care
I had laid out just the right books.
I had almost turned down the pages.

Beauty is so rare a thing.
So few drink of my fountain.

So much barren regret,
So many hours wasted!
And now I watch, from the window,
the rain, the wandering busses.

"Their little cosmos is shaken" -
the air is alive with that fact.
In their parts of the city
they are played on by diverse forces.
How do I know?
Oh, I know well enough.
For them there is something afoot.
As for me;
I had over-prepared the event -

Beauty is so rare a thing.
So few drink of my fountain.

Two friends: a breath of the forest. . .
Friends? Are people less friends
because one has just, at last, found them?
Twice they promised to come.

"Between the night and the morning?"
Beauty would drink of my mind.
Youth would awhile forget
my youth is gone from me.

(Speak up! You have danced so stiffly?

Someone admired your works,
And said so frankly.

"Did you talk like a fool,
The first night?
The second evening?"

"But they promised again:
'To-morrow at tea-time'.")

Now the third day is here -
no word from either;
No word from her nor him,
Only another man's note:
"Dear Pound, I am leaving England."

Ezra Pound

Villonaud For This Yule

Towards the Noel that morte saison
<i>(Christ make the shepherds' homage dear!)</i>
Then when the grey wolves everychone
Drink of the winds their chill small-beer
And lap o' the snows food's gueredon
Then makyth my heart his yule-tide cheer
<i>(Skoal! with the dregs if the clear be gone!)</i>
Wineing the ghosts of yester-year.

Ask ye what ghost I dream upon?
<i>(What of the magians' scented gear?)</i>
The ghosts of dead loves everyone
That make the stark winds reek with fear
Lest love return with the foison sun
And slay the memories that me cheer
<i>(Such as I drink to mine fashion)</i>
Wineing the ghosts of yester-year.

Where are the joys my heart had won?
<i>(Saturn and Mars to Zeus drawn near!)</i>
Where are athe lips mine lay upon,
Aye! where are the glances feat and clear
That bade my heart his valor don?

I skoal to the eyes as grey-blown meer
<i>(Who knows whose was that paragon?)</i>
Wineing the ghosts of yester-year.

Prince: ask me not what I have done
Nor what God hath that can me cheer
But ye ask first where the winds are gone
Wineing the ghosts of yester-year.

Ezra Pound

Women Before A Shop

The gew-gaws of false amber and false turquoise attract them.
'Like to like nature': these agglutinous yellows!

Ezra Pound

Yeux Glauques

Gladstone was still respected,
When John Ruskin produced
'King's Treasuries'; Swinburne
And Rossetti still abused.

Foetid Buchanan lifted up his voice
When that faun's head of hers
Became a pastime for
Painters and adulterers.

The Burne-Jones cartons
Have preserved her eyes;
Still, at the Tate, they teach
Cophetua to rhapsodize;

Thin like brook-water,
With a vacant gaze.
The English Rubaiyat was still-born
In those days.

The thin, clear gaze, the same
Still darts out faun-like from the half-ruin'd face,
Questing and passive. . . .
;Ah, poor Jenny's case' . . .

Bewildered that a world
Shows no surprise
At her last maquero's
Adulteries.

Ezra Pound